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Lessons of falling darkness

George Steiner

PIERRE CORNEILLE
Oeuvres complètes: Tome 1
Edited by Georges Couton
1269pp. Paris: Gallimard.

If one had to identify the obvious deviant ground in literary scholarship and criticism as practised in Britain, the waste land on which academic stulteness matches critical blindness or, at best, it would be the works of Corneille and Racine. Francis Yates's treatment of Racine, in *The Idea of a Theatre* (1949), suggests that American awareness has, on occasion at least, been more responsible. But overall, the English language and Anglo-Saxon sensibility have, since Dryden, been all but closed to one of the pre-eminent achievements of spirit in human thought and poetry.

Basic explanations lie to hand. The alexandrine rhyming couplets in which Corneille and Racine write their plays defy convincing translation. The evidence is, certainly, dismaying. Available versions of Corneille and Racine in English, be they in prose or verse, be they at the scholarly or the literary level, are, with very few fragmentary exceptions, a misery. That Robert Lowell's Senecan-Jacobean "imitation" of Racine's *Phèdre* could be acclaimed as somehow adequate and, indeed, exemplary, only underlines the chasm which separates the original text from any serious response. In an Anglo-American setting, yet it is a plain fact that "rarer" languages than French, and poets or dramatists inherently more "difficult" than either Corneille or Racine, have secured powerfully into the syllabus of Anglo-Saxon recognitions. One need mention only Pushkin, the masters of Chinese lyric poetry or such presences as Rilke, Neruda or Cavafy. No, the milieu of translation, the critical tone-deafness which transforms one of the touchstones of all poetic-moral utterance (Phèdre's monologue of visionary terror in Act IV, scene 6) - into "verse" of the following sort:

Primer, what will you say to these? I see
The tremendous arm roll thundering at your feet:
See you ponder unknown penalties
To execute yourself upon your own...
(which, the Cambridge University Press assures us, "will act well, and also give the armchair reader a sense of the original") - this *miserable* is a symptom, at the least, of the failure of translation.

It has often been argued that Corneille and Racine concentrate, make uncompromisingly evident, precisely those modes of the imagination and of style most alien to the mass of English literature. Correspondingly, it is this genre which French polemicists against Corneille and Racine (Stendhal and Claudel, for example) invoke when seeking freer, more hybrid genres and performative means for French drama and poetry. In such polemics the profound indebtedness of *Le Rouge et le Noir* to Corneille's psychology of erotic pretexts or the fact that *Le Partage de midi* is, in many respects, a variant, a meditation of genius, on Racine's *Bérénice*, tend to be forgotten. The general point is, none the less, a substantive one. The closed forms, prosodic and scenic, of French seventeenth-century drama, the rhetoric, the articulation of the world through a formal syntax, manifest in both Corneille and Racine (although under radically contrasting perspectives) are, at the very least, to be unacceptable to the main traditions of the life of the mind and of sentiment as these are enacted in the structures of the English language.

The likelihood is reinforced by even a moment's consideration of the English literature itself. The lineage of high formal-rhetorical drama, as it proceeds from, say, Pulke Grenville and Ben Jonson to Congreve, to Shelley's *Cenci*, to the tragedies of Byron and experiments by T. S. Eliot, has remained eccentric. Informed, rarely, it is from allowing the fact - not, strictly, it is obvious - that Pope's *Mac* is a masterpiece in its own right

and an epic which, so far as English goes, comes second only to Milton. The pulse of English life and art beats freer.

Again, however, this is to rephrase rather than grapple with the problem. So formal a rhetoric as Baudelaire, in whose alexandrine the music of Racine is constant, has passed vividly into English perception. The caremonious eloquence of Dante has not barred the *Commedia* from its subtle, unbroken penetration into English poetic practice and canons of criticism. There is in the Anglo-Saxon temper a robust pragmatism perennially resistant to declamatory rigour and brilliance, be they Alexander Pope's or Enoch Powell's. There is a bias, recalcitrant to exact definition but unmistakably central, towards a tragicomic sense of the human condition, a virtually unexamined (Aldous Huxley's essay on tragedy and the lie being an isolated exception) but pervasive conviction that life is always a mixed business, that the palace domestics or the next-door neighbour are having a cheery cup of tea at the very moment at which Agamemnon steps into the bath. This pragmatic bias ("come off it") is an idiom fundamentally untranslatable into the language of Corneille, Racine, Bossuet or de Gaulle towards a pluralistic, hybrid view of existence, is, or course, quintessential in, and given linguistic-national permanence by Shakespeare. The old saw "Shakespeare or Racine" seems to carry a considerable weight of intuitive and empirical proof. Why, then, can Schiller or Mandelstam answer to both? Why, then, is Manzoni equally open to the dynamics of Shakespeare's history plays and Racine's *Athalie*? Some final nerve-centre of contrasting historical inheritance and national self-definition, some central space of individual and collective identity - in which language and history, instinct and art meet in ways we cannot analyse except by metaphoric suggestion - is involved. But the notion that this is so, at once vague and persuasive as it may be, gives no ground for satisfaction. On the contrary.

Any commonplace listing of masterpieces of English literature, of the works which have gone around the globe and most of English literature the most readily accessible, truly universal imaginative legacy after antiquity, will include *Rothschilds Crusade*, *Gulliver's Travels*, the works of the Brontës and of Dickens, *Alice in Wonderland*. Such a constellation is suggestive. Many of the classics of English literature not only include the child and the world of the child in their imagined matter: they are fictions which can, which ask to be read by the young as well as the mature. (Indeed, are there many major English novelists, with the obvious exceptions of Jane Austen, George Eliot and, fitfully, D. H. Lawrence, whose focus, whose appeal is wholly "adult"?) In the way of Flaubert, of Proust, of Thomas Mann? It is part of the wonder and liberality of English literature, to encompass all ages and conditions in its perceptions and realizations of life. It is this catholicity of welcome which relates Chaucer to Shakespeare, Shakespeare to Blake and to Dickens - and which, perhaps, places Milton supremely (contentiously) to one side.

In Shakespeare, of course, such prodigality of awareness and appeal finds its summation. There is much in the comedies which is unashamedly "childish". There is much in the plots of even the major tragedies which defies the exactions of realism or rationality. Shakespeare draws on folk-tale and legend, where Racine draws on myth. And a Shakespearean play carries with it a wealth of physical business, of exits and alarms, of woods on the march and seas tempestuous, of duel and battle. These are instrumental in a semantic totality which spectators to, no Charles Lamb has published "Tales from Corneille and Racine". French neo-classical drama is the crystallization of adulthood. One could almost define it as the view and construct of a childless world. Not only are there, with the famous and "special" exceptions of *Esther* and *Athalie*, no children on stage, but, in an

absolutely decisive sense, the language of Corneille and Racine, their sense of what it is that matters to man, is focused uncompromisingly on adult sensibility and on the schooled consciousness of an élite.

The consequence is a depth of argument, an integral purity of executive forms, a substantive and formal concentration unrivalled after Greek tragedy. Corneille and Racine know that the greatest ecstasies and enormities of which the human spirit is capable and which our awareness can observe, can be, are enacted between a man and a woman standing, facing each other in an undorned room and armed only with that transcendent weapon which is speech. No ghosts need appear on battlements, no super-



A study of a Roman soldier from a notebook of Claude Lorrain, consisting of thirty-five leaves with sixteen loose sheets, which was offered for sale in Sotheby's yesterday. This figure is reminiscent of soldiers in Claude's "Constant Scene with a Battle on a Bridge", 1655.

natural creatures bubble from the heath, no crowds toss their sweaty caps. For Corneille and Racine, immensities of terror lie in a change of grammatical person (the irretrievable shift from *vous* to *tu* in *Phèdre*, II, 5). The question of whether or not a protagonist will require a chair, will cease to stand before destiny, is sufficient to embody ultimate truths of suffering and self-destruction. Nearly all productions of Shakespeare are, in some degree, selective and contingent: the producer makes more or less extensive cuts - how many of us have actually seen, and been embarrassed by, the Clown in *Othello*? No line can be excised from Racine's major plays. And this is no accidental attribute of the use of rhymed couplets. It is a criterion of totality, of utmost necessity. It tells of the compaction of the imagined, thought universe, and including those theological and philosophic dimensions which are so rarely adduced explicitly. In Shakespeare - into a single immensity of collision (perhaps the term "singularity" as it is used to modern cosmology best illustrates such compaction). The ideal is precisely that of the "one ball" torn through "the iron gates of life". Hence the neo-classical adherence to the volutes of time, place and action, an adherence which, notoriously, Corneille found uncomfortable. Hence also a control, a "minimalist magnitude" - Shakespeare uses about twenty thousand words, Racine less than two thousand - which give to a play such as *Bérénice* a

perfection and, dare one say it, an adulthood of a kind which the Shakespearean theatre did not intend or achieve, which difference distances two civilizations.

Of the two masters, Corneille is the more difficult to engage. The difficulty may be that which renders Latinity more resistant to modern empathy than what we take to be the radiant immediacies of the Greek and Hellenic spirit. Corneille's Latinity, moreover, his identification with the Roman and "romantic" Mediterranean world, is, in many respects, a Jesuit and baroque Latinity. It coincides perfectly with the soaring austerity of those *Léçons de ténacité* which are the glory of French seventeenth-century music. In Racine's tragic theocracy, with its Jansenist coloration, lurks the terrible probability that those pagan personae who are culpable before the advent of Christ in time are everlastingly damned. The history of grace begins after them. Greek tragic mythology is the privileged ground of Racine's conjecture. The consular, imperial and decadent Rome of Corneille's dramas is charged with the incipient energies and challenge of revelation.

Decisive in Corneille's world-view is the theological-political-historical conception of Christianity as a profoundly "Roman" epiphany. Pagan, secular Rome gives to the transcendent mystery of the coming of Christ its anchorage in the world, its institutional logic and *digressus*, *urbis et orbis*. The conversions at the close of *Polyeucte* are wholly consistent. It is in the name of the republican sacrificial justice practised by a Lucius Junius Brutus and a Manlius that Félix is ready to doom his own daughter, Pauline. When grace bursts upon him, "Le cède à des transports que je ne connais pas". Félix becomes the instrument of historical evolution within a civic-imperial continuity. In the new concordat, the theological and the civic are indivisible: "Servez bien votre Dieu, servez notre Monarque". Throughout Corneille, in *Horace*, *Cinna*, *Polyeucte*, *Pompée*, *Sertorius*, *Scipion*, *Œdipe*, *Œdipe*, *Œdipe*, the *continuo* is the word "Rome". Sertorius' famous boast - "Rome n'est plus dans Rome, elle est où je suis" - could be taken to define Corneille's genius. Even the briefest of victories over Rome can be achieved only in Rome. "Puisse enfin je triomphe de Rome et de son Rome", proclaims Corneille's *Bérénice*, in a line which exemplifies the taut grammar of tragedy, the profound but unobtrusive realization of extreme tragic emotion through a nuance of syntax. Vinus' description of Galba's progress in *Othou* -

Lorsque d'Espagne à Rome il semait son chemin
De Romains immolés à son nouveau dessein...

could stand in half-serious epigraph to Corneille's career from *Le Cid* of 1636-7 to *Pulchérie* and *Sertorius* in the early 1670s. Corneille's topography, his historicity, are capstone, imperial and militant. His "Romanism", in both senses of the word, his Augustan and Constantine sense of Christendom, are immediate to his work. They are readily available still, though with obvious modulations, to Dr Johnson's conservatism and organic grasp of a Christian order. They are now difficult to recapture. Certainly in any climate of sceptical and populist plurality, Corneille's most obvious modern heir, Montherlant, whose *La Reine morte* and *Malgré de Santiago* are among the masterpieces of the twentieth-century stage, does not "translate" either.

Yet Corneille's principal concern is one that presses insistently on our own lives. The politics of Shakespeare are not politics in our sense. They relate to the primordial rhythms of elevation and misfortune, to gestures of ambition and of betrayal, archetypal in their universality. The expressive modes of the political on the Shakespearean scene - *Coriolanus* being the rebargative exception - are those of universal exception, of festive ritual or lament. The politics which fill the plays of Corneille are, at one level, ours.

In his acute and brilliant study,

Corneille et la dialectique du héros (1963), one of the very few books of contemporary literary criticism, incidentally, which Sartre found worthy of close notice, Serge Doubrovsky argues that a single, rigorous theme unifies the entirety of Corneille's output. It is that of the Master-Servant relation and dialectic as it was to be posed systematically in Hegel's *Phenomenology*. In Corneille's first tragic play, *Médée*, with its evocations of once Lucanian and baroque of the world of sorcery, the heroine, asked what resources remain to her in disaster - "Dens un si grand revers que vous reste-t-il?" - answers: "Moi". The Corneillian protagonist is possessed by a *libido dominandi* so absolute that it can suffer no rival, no atypical, legislative or, even, theological constraint. In turn, destructively or self-destructively, the *Cid*, *Horace*, *Polyeucte*, will endeavour to force heroism to the limits of atlantid and abstract totality. Augustus pardons Cinna in order to prove that he is, indeed, "master of himself as of the universe". This gesture, and Corneille's formulation, haunted Napoleon, as it may have de Gaulle when, as a Corneillian phrase, he refused clemency to Brasillach, himself author of a sparkling study of Corneille. To accomplish "le principe suprême de la Maltrise" so that even death is a will, completely mastered act, is, says Doubrovsky, the sole aim of Corneille's heroes. Their autistic splendour can be encapsulated in Goethe's ominous question: "Do I exist when another does?"

But how is this code of mastery to be reconciled with the requirements, no, with the mere existence and preservation of society? Having overcome his rivals, those who would aspire to mastery against or beside him, the Hegelian *Herr* finds himself sovereign but sterile. It is the *Knecht*, his servant, who, by virtue of his choice of servile but productive life, becomes the carrier of historical development and human progress. This solution to the paradox of heroism is not open to Corneille or to the ancient regime as Corneille knew it. The four great plays of Corneille's early career - *Le Cid*, *Horace*, *Cinna*, and *Polyeucte* are included in this first volume of what promises to be a definitive edition - represent, according to Doubrovsky's analysis, successive, tightly-linked attempts to resolve the dilemma of destructive and suicidal heroism. Finned accommodations are arrived at between the *Cid* and the royal order whose Master-Servant he will be: between murdering Horace and the republic which has saved; between Augustus and a patrician order whose ennoblement, whose obscure self-contempt inevitably shadow his own hegemony.

Doubrovsky's reading of *Polyeucte*, with its critique of Péguy's ardent commentary (Corneille has had inspired readers from Racine and Voltaire to the present), is arresting. *Polyeucte*'s election of martyrdom, his self-election to grace, carries the dialectic of the heroic to its theologically ambiguous boundaries. "The *one* *deus* latent in all heroism and in this point", Corneille, is predecessor not only to Hegel but also to Nietzsche - is only transparently masked by *Polyeucte*'s *être-pour-Dieu*. Hence Claudel's uneasy hatred of this play.

With *Pompée* begins the long suite of dramatics which Corneille, unsurprisingly, observes of the politics of his own age, will explore the decline, corruptions and self-betrays of the heroic ideal. This theme is given its most lyric and desolate expression in the last of Corneille's plays, the incomparable, autumnal *Sertorius*. Note how the prosody and word-order "perform" the hero's death and how grammar is made requiem.

A pelée du palais il sortait dans la rue
Ouvait fêche a part d'un main inconnu;
Deux autres l'ont suivi; et l'un des
Comme si toutes trois l'évalent séduit au
Cœur,
Dans un ruisseau de sang tombant mort sur la place.

Doubrovsky's synthesis is illuminating. Power relations are, indeed, at the heart of Corneille's theatre. But the

political force of his theatre can, perhaps, be more simply characterized.

Politics and language interact at every point. Language is a principal instrument of politics. In turn, politics is conditioned by language. As politics enter into the marrow of discourse, language modulates to rhetoric. This modulations seems to generate autonomous energies. Ideology and political purpose come to possess both speech and the speaker. The rhetoric of political statement, with its reductionism, its grammar of polarizations, its stylized violence, comes to dominate not only enunciation, but behaviour. Under pressure of politics, speech and act are fused into "speech-acts", in the literal sense of the term. The imperatives of articulation, unfolding out of an internalized logic of extremity, make plurality, compromise, reconciliation impossible. Human speech, which ought to be the most supple and provisional of media, stands to monism. It closes the speaker's world, as in amir.

Thinkers on language, such as de Maistre, Karl Kraus, Orwell, have observed this homicidal atrophy. Few writers have been able to render imaginatively the politicization of language and the linguistics of political conduct. Stendhal does so at times (and, fragmentarily throughout *Lucien Leuwen*). Dostoevsky achieves it in *The Demons*, Conrad in both *The Secret Agent* and *Under Western Eyes*. No writer surpasses Cornille in the rendition of the progressive dehumanization of discourse, in the dramatic presentation of the process whereby the political word comes to dominate the speaker and agent, coining him, by its own unleashed dynamics, to propositions, in gestures, from which there is no return. This rendition and presentment, with its pertinence to the semantics of political falsehood and barbarism in the twentieth century, constitute the core of Cornille's theatre and its "lesson of falling darkness".

The pressures of economic and caste intervals on what should be the spontaneities of loving address, emerge cruelly in Cornille's early comedies, most notably in *La Phce Royale* (carefully annotated in this first volume of Georges Couton's edition, these shift pieces form a just prelude to the great dramas and tragedies). In *Le Cid*, the exactions of public rhetoric reach searingly into private lives. Cornille stringently identifies speech as the bearer of mastering doom: "A mot, comte, deux mots", says Rodrigue in his celebrated carle; "Quatre mots, seulement" will be his plea to Chimène; in a motion which immediately translates the laconic fatality of suggestion into one of literal death: "Après ne me répondez qu'avec une seule épée." But in all literature there is no severer study of human attitudes made totalitarian by speech-styles, of life made frozen and formulaic by irrefragable diction, than *Horace*. Old Horace's all too famous "Qu'il mourût" when hearing (misleading) news of his son's retreat before the enemy, is not only a virtuoso stroke of syntactical compression, but an onramp of utterance which expounds Cornille's central insight: In the Rome of Cornille's play, as in that of David's painting, the word-made-gesture is absolute ruler. Discourse masters life and death. "Ne me parlez jamais en faveur d'un infâme" literally enacts a "sentence of death". It annihilates a speech-object which happens to be a living being. It is not any action by Camille which provokes Horace to final murderousness; it is the voicing of (highly restrained) lamentation. Horace's "Que dis-tu malheureux?" his "Va donc les enfers pleurer ton Couvace", precisely locates the verbal condition, or crime, and the rhetorical automatism, of "inhuman" response. When Augustus bids Chimène:

Prête, sans me troubler, l'oreille à mes discours;
D'aucun mot, d'aucun cri, n'en interromps le cours.

—he is, momentarily creating in *grand silence* in which forgiveness, tolerance, and hopeful uncertainty can return to life. If Chimène was to break this armistice of silence, the terrorism of political rhetoric, exponential in dialogue, would impel both speakers to fatality.

After *Polyxène*, grace being indeed, the transfiguration of word into logos, Cornille's plays turn on

this fatality. Cornille's later, lesser known dramas are now showing signs of renewed vigour. There have been, over the past few years, powerfully convincing stagings of *Rodogune*, that oratorio of dynastic hatreds, of *Sertorius*, performed to packed houses at the Comédie in Paris, of *Sophonisbe*, taken up by an austere disciplined young troupe in Switzerland. *Oedipe*, as Dostoevsky argues, a more original, subtler work than a more conventionally supposed. Foreshadowing current structuralism, Cornille dramatizes the stress of incest on the grammar of personal identification and self-identification. *Tite et Bérénice* is far more than merely an agonistic defeat at the rival hands of Racine. *Surlina* is a masterpiece awaiting adequate production. It is a portrayal of the *tristitia* of politics such as one finds it in moments of Conrad's *Nostromo* and the desolate *commedia* of Musil's *Man Without Qualities*. But the music of the play is unique. In each of these examples, abound of *Perthuis*, Cornille's penetration into the inertial violence which the rhetoric of political motives (it is interesting to compare Kenneth Burke's pioneer analyses of totalitarian eloquence) exercises on the human condition.

Pompeii (1643-4) concludes this volume. The hero "n'y parle point". Note Cornille's phrasing: the key fact is not that Pompey is himself absent from the play, though this is the case, it is that "he does not speak in it". And Cornille, widow of treacherously murdered Pompey, meets Caesar in three confrontations. From encounter to encounter, language grows more absolute, more unyielding to the vulgar claims of life. Caesar hears the unconquerable blood of Scipio in Cornille's defiance. He seeks to assuage her vengeful passion:

César s'efforce de s'acquiescer vers vous
De ce qu'il voudrait rendre à cet illustre époux

(self-reference, in the third person singular, practised also by de Gaulle, distances the mortal contingencies of individuality from the imperatives of style). Cornille views with Caesar in a contest of generosity. She warns him of an Egyptian plot against his life. But her motive is vengeance:

Mais, avec ce mot que j'ai de ta ruine,
Je me jette au-devant du coup qui t'assassine.

El forme des débris avec trop de raison
Pour en almer l'effet par une trahison.

Flame on the salt marsh,
thin chimney
like a pen, or a pencil,
It makes the surface
a plainish thing
and burns, tribeless now,
over the slobland.

On a concrete apron
by the slack perimeter,
there is a line of surplus trucks,
nine gross of jerrycans
under a pegged tarpaulin,
and a stack of exhaust pipes
wrapped in waxed paper.
A short man in an overcoat
the new government auctioneer
waddles, stops, and waddles on
like a dumpy general.

Over the road
on reclaimed space
and dry dumped earth,
there is that pointed,
unpainted sense
of real absence
that bites like a beginning.
Ah, we say, this is culture
the flame, the hardware
and a voice
that brings what it describes
and draws from the earth and the air
this new-strung form
that better what we are.

Qui le sait et la souffre a part à l'infamie.
Si je veux ton trépas, c'est en son juste ennemie

(note the incisive use of the present tense in "qui l'assassine", a use which makes of Cornille Caesar's sole, subtly scornful saviour). Moved by her grandeur of spirit, Caesar seeks reconciliation. But an implacable poetry has Cornille in its grasp. In perfect lucidity, Cornille perceives and articulates the paradox of her frozen condition:

Je l'avouerai pourtant, comme vraiment
Romaine,
Que pour toi mon estime est égale à ma haine;
Que l'une et l'autre est juste, et moi le
pouvoir,
L'une de ta vertu, l'autre de mon
devoir...

Only the ceremonies of death can resolve the dialectic of heroism. Speech quickens to a magnificence of menace:

L'air, n'en doute point, au sortir de ces lieux
Soulève contre toi les hommes et les
dieux qui t'ont flétri, ces dieux qui
t'ont trompée,
Ces dieux qui dans Pharsale ont mal servi
Pompeie,
Qui, la foudre à la main, l'ont pu voir
égorger.

Its connotations tear taut and it vouches venger.
One seems to hear René Char's arch-Cornillan aphorism, with its wit-fury on grammatical and symbolic futurity: "L'algèbre est au futur." And with Cornille's widow of treacherously murdered Pompey, meets Caesar in three confrontations. From encounter to encounter, language grows more absolute, more unyielding to the vulgar claims of life. Caesar hears the unconquerable blood of Scipio in Cornille's defiance. He seeks to assuage her vengeful passion:

César s'efforce de s'acquiescer vers vous
De ce qu'il voudrait rendre à cet illustre époux

(self-reference, in the third person singular, practised also by de Gaulle, distances the mortal contingencies of individuality from the imperatives of style). Cornille views with Caesar in a contest of generosity. She warns him of an Egyptian plot against his life. But her motive is vengeance:

Mais, avec ce mot que j'ai de ta ruine,
Je me jette au-devant du coup qui t'assassine.

El forme des débris avec trop de raison
Pour en almer l'effet par une trahison.

Amphion

Flame on the salt marsh,
thin chimney
like a pen, or a pencil,
It makes the surface
a plainish thing
and burns, tribeless now,
over the slobland.

On a concrete apron
by the slack perimeter,
there is a line of surplus trucks,
nine gross of jerrycans
under a pegged tarpaulin,
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A short man in an overcoat
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and a voice
that brings what it describes
and draws from the earth and the air
this new-strung form
that better what we are.

Tom Paulin

Living France

Patrick McCarthy

FRANÇOIS MITTERRAND

The Wheat and the Chaff: The Personal Diaries of the President of France 1971-1978

Translated by Richard S. Woodward
284pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson.
£12.95.
0 297 78101 4

Readers who pick up *The Wheat and the Chaff*, a selection from François Mitterrand's diaries between 1971 and 1978, hoping for sensational revelations or intimate secrets will be disappointed. "I have little taste for indiscretion," says Mitterrand and this is a huge understatement. He is the most private of men, keeping an edge of distance between himself and his cronies, clearly ill-at-ease with crowds and today relishing the lofty remoteness of the French presidency. *The Wheat and the Chaff* contains a curiously moving comment on Aldo Moro's death. By tossing Moro's corpse out to the Rome streets, the Red Brigades had, reflects Mitterrand, "dropped him in the last shred of his dignity" — his loneliness.

Not only does Mitterrand tell us little about his family, his emotions and his dreams but he is scarcely more generous with information about his political battles. His career has been a series of defeats, each followed by an ever more extraordinary come-back. In the 1970s alone he lost a presidential and a parliamentary election, his alliance with the Communists broke up and his leadership of the Socialist Party was challenged by Michel Rocard. Each time he recovered, deploying his innate flair for political intrigue and his enormous tenacity. "I am incapable of stopping until I have exhausted all the reserves of my will," he writes in a rare, confiding moment, "I leave but a minimum to chance".

Certainly he was relying little on chance or spontaneity when he decided to publish these diaries. They serve a very specific political purpose: to depict the leader of the socialist-communist alliance as a humane, traditional Frenchman. The Right might and did howl that the Common Programme meant the imposition of a foreign, collectivist dictatorship but how could such an allan order be imposed by a leader who still reads Lamartine — even "Le Lac" — and is moved to lyrical effusions by the Morvan forests? Not that Mitterrand is being untruthful in this book. The author of the diaries shows a scrupulous concern for individual liberty which the president of France has cultivated recently. Mitterrand intervened with Fidel Castro to obtain the release of the dissident Cuban poet, Armando Valladares, who had spent twenty-two years in jail. But a reader must not expect to learn more than one part of the truth and Anglo-Saxon politicians have probably discovered that Mitterrand is a more complex, more wily and more obstinate man than he would have us believe.

There is no reason to doubt his affection for Lamartine or for other Romantic poets like Alfred de Vigny because Mitterrand is steeped in the writing of the nineteenth century and can offer us some original insights. While "he admires Zola as a Dreyfusard, he also considers him very nearly the equal of Balzac as a novelist. He makes a plea for Paul Fort, who is to most people a very minor and to Mitterrand a very neglected symbolist poet. How good a writer is Mitterrand himself? It is frequently stated that he is not, but he is a politician and he has been an outstanding writer, but this is surely an exaggeration. His sentences tend to dissolve into vagueness and his effusions into banality. Although he does not mention him, he seems to be trying to write like Chateaubriand. The spoken word and Mitterrand better and if his speeches contain too large a dose of old-fashioned rhetoric their movement is direct and urgent. The Epinal speech of 1971 gives a better idea of his political force than these rather bland diaries.

François Mitterrand receives a kind

word in *The Wheat and the Chaff*, for his novels than because he comes from the same region as Mitterrand. Indeed much of Mitterrand's time is spent in the Charente, where he is able to reassure French voters, it is because he excludes the solid stability of the provinces. His diaries describe the cycle of seasons, the long summer evenings in the countryside and the migratory birds; oak trees chopped down by property developers; a cry of protest that reminds us of another of his favourite writers, Jean Giono, and explains why he was won applause from environmentalists.

Few younger French politicians share this sense of France (although Mitterrand's minister of industry, Jacques Chirac, may be an exception). Pierre Chevènement may be one of the few who appears frequently in the diaries, either because of personal differences or because Mitterrand was too proud and too Gaullist to contemptuous, the young Resistance spokesmen and the leader of the Free France could not work together. But, although Mitterrand became the Gaullist's greatest foe, he was not immune from the fascination which de Gaulle exerted. "In conviction that he was France," admits Mitterrand, "I moved me more than it moved me".

"France" as opposed to "the French people" who shape the destiny. But this may be no more than counter-mystique which Mitterrand expounds in language worthy of de Gaulle's memoirs: "I do not need an 'idea' of France. I live France. I have a deep intuitive awareness of France, of physical France and a passion for her geography, her living body. For it is there that my roots have grown. There is no need for me to seek the soul of France — it lives in me."

The political consequences Mitterrand draws from this vision complement rather than relieve de Gaulle's. De Gaulle's sense of the nation was flawed, according to Mitterrand, because he divided the country, whereas he himself would unite Frenchmen and enable the working class to participate for the first time in government. But, whereas de Gaulle's sense of the nation was flawed, according to Mitterrand, because he divided the country, whereas he himself would unite Frenchmen and enable the working class to participate for the first time in government. But, whereas de Gaulle's sense of the nation was flawed, according to Mitterrand, because he divided the country, whereas he himself would unite Frenchmen and enable the working class to participate for the first time in government.

There is nothing in the least hard about this, for both de Gaulle and Mitterrand understand that "mystique" is an essential part of "politique". Draping himself in de Gaulle's mantle, Mitterrand is promising to use the state to defend the French people against a world-wide depression. He may not seem the right leader for our time because he has no knowledge of economics and Lamartine is not much help in understanding microchips. But Mitterrand believes that economic decisions are political and that the state must demonstrate its strength.

It follows that authentic French leaders will make life difficult for foreigners and, as the depression deepens, Mitterrand will almost certainly become a troublesome ally (aided and abetted by Chevènement) who is described as a left-wing Gaullist. The spark of some of de Gaulle's bold, colourful fireworks and Mitterrand's government has been grumbling about US interest rates and President Reagan's trade sanctions. Confined with intolerably high unemployment, the weak franc and dissent from his own supporters, Mitterrand may well be forced to capitulate to some of the form of protectionism. And no one should be beguiled by these diaries because the quite genuinely humane Mitterrand can be very charming indeed.

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PAPER OF GREAT BRITAIN, MADE IN GREAT BRITAIN

Sorry events in Happy Valley

David Pryce-Jones

JAMES FOX

White Mischief
289pp. Cape. £8.95.
0 24 01731 4

White Mischief closes the file on a man dead famous in his day. On January 24, 1941, Lord Erroll, 22nd earl and hereditary High Constable of Scotland, was found shot dead in his car at the edge of a road in Kenya. Erroll had been in love with Diana Broughton, wife of a neighbour. Sir John Delves Broughton, baronet, racing man, heir to huge estates, was duly arrested and brought to trial in Nairobi. Defended brilliantly by Harry Munn, reputed to have been the ablest barrister in Africa, Broughton was acquitted. Returning to England soon afterwards, but without his wife, he committed suicide in 1943. If not Broughton, who then had shot Erroll? And did he really live like this, or only when they were in the colonies?

James Fox first heard of the case towards the end of the 1960s while employed on an East African newspaper. Investigation appeared on the staff of the *Sunday Times*, he was invited to assist Cyril Connolly in researching and writing a long article on the subject for that paper. Connolly soon began to think of the case as a mystery. The two were to be like a Holmes and Watson. Connolly brooded and speculated, tabulating his thoughts, filling notebook after notebook. Meanwhile Mr Fox was busy with the telexes to shaggy old addresses in pursuit of witnesses and evidence.

From the outset Fox had realized that Connolly was working out unbidden aspirations, and that story too had its fascination for him. Sixty-five at the time, Connolly had been writing a weekly book-review in the *Sunday Times* for almost twenty years. "What are you writing now, except your reviews, I mean?" was the question kind friends used to put to him, or so he liked to complain. A more was tweaked. Although secretly proud of his reviews, he continued to cherish a life-long wish to do justice to

the highest literary ambitions. Aesthetes such as he seem to have had built into their basic education the notion that imaginative literature has some kind of ultimate almost sacrosanct value. Journalism, for which he had marvellous gifts, came off definitely second-best.

At intervals Connolly had attempted to give form to the masterpiece in his mind. In practice he was always to find that he could not help basing characters and scenes on direct experience, or in other words reverting to the journalism at which he excelled. He had positioned himself at the centre of *Enemies of Promise* and *The Unquiet Grave* in such a way that both books could be considered as much journalistic as autobiographical, which was why he did not really listen, I think, when the same kind friends told him that these were his masterpieces.

Better was to come, he always hoped. But each fresh effort proved once more that either he was unable to project his imagination much beyond what he knew of himself, or the world around him resisted being put into imaginative shape. Certainly he lived a sheltered life, in an Eton-Balliol-Chelsea-Riviera atmosphere among like-minded clever people, who rarely came unstuck unless through some obvious and rather banal fault of their own. Nothing very meaningful in literary terms could be made out of such cosiness: no plot, no moral.

Satire was all there was for it, a period type of satire in which the author is established at everybody else's expense. This petered out into stale journalism too, leaving as a last resort parody of other styles, playing games with words, an acrostic or a rebus, unusual quotations, finding that the right analogy for Wylan Auden was "a nasty unwed". Unable or unwilling to extend experience or to change his definition of what a masterpiece ought to be, Connolly chafed. Frustration was no easier to bear for being largely self-imposed. The weeks of many creative fictions could be sensed in the energetic melancholia with which he habitually denounced himself as hack, critic and fool.

The Erroll murder was to provide Connolly with one more start, as it happened a last start. Here was a true-life novel, with every element ready-made: complicated plot, the

background of an Africa which he had romanticized since childhood, a social setting that was familiar and sensational, and the ambivalent point of view that, awful as the characters might be, they were the kind with which the author felt at ease. Moreover, there was something representative about that road-side fatal — an enigma for a class country at war, an empire. If only the novelist's demand for the fullest information could be met, a true moral could surely be revealed in true facts.

The necessary research had Connolly out of bed and working at dawn. The measure of his ambition could be taken by the enthusiasm and professionalism, not to say ruthlessness, with which he inquired into anything of interest to him. Witnesses were tracked down and interviewed, including the CID detective once in charge of the case; the Broughtons' former lady's maid, and their solicitor in Nairobi; ballistics experts; residents of Kenya's Happy Valley by the dozen.

Among the latter was Diana Broughton, *Jeune fille* of the case, who had subsequently married Lord Delamere and has continued to live in Kenya. "A creamy ash blonde," Connolly had described her, rejoicing in every detail of her path onward and upward. He met her by design at a dinner party but in the circumstances could not bring himself to question her. Besides, she had always made a point of refusing to discuss the past.

There was Hugh Dickinson too, a friend who had loyally followed her out of Kenya. Some suspected that he had been an accomplice of Broughton's. Also Juanita Carberry, daughter of a man convicted of currency-smuggling, a sadist, who had renounced his title as part of his admiration for Hitler. As a fifteen-year-old girl, Juanita Carberry happened to visit Broughton at home within hours of the murder, and she had seen a bonfire upon which he was burning gym shoes and a bloodstained stocking (still not fully explained). "The end of the trail," Connolly noted at this point. Broughton had been fifty-seven, and doubts remained about his agility, his capacity to shoot, and his movements at the time of the murder. In Connolly's final view, a jealous Broughton, perhaps with an accomplice, had almost certainly murdered Erroll, and the Crown had bungled the prosecution.

a sea passage of one kilometre to an island in the bay. The general tone of the book is well conveyed by the following passage, which describes Stanley's march through the Ituri forest on his way to the relief of Emin Pasha in 1888:

No white man had been that way before, and no man would wish to go again. A gloomy, dank, steaming, primeval rain forest, it was for Stanley "a region of horrors". Trees smothered in creepers, rising two hundred feet above the dense, wet vegetation, obscured the light of the sun; huge snakes coiled menacingly round overhanging boughs; all kinds of... loathsome insects... buzzed, crawled and fitted between the fungus and the leaves, primitive tribesmen kept strangers away with spears and arrows and poisoned speckers which they buried in the ground beneath the rotting leaves.

True, the Ituri forest has never been the ideal terrain through which to march a large expedition of hungry porters, particularly when one had seriously miscalculated the distances involved. But the main difficulties were not due to the scanty band of pygmy hunters and their little game-pygmies, but rather to the almost total lack of food and shelter. And if no white man had passed that way before, the other added ingredient of a social, economic and cultural history of the large newspapers of the past century and a half.

In short, no over-ager librarian or innocent Christmas shopper should be misled by the pretty dust-jacket. This is an ignorant, rather lazy book, which is not least even the uninitiated reader many steps towards the realities of Africa explored.

Six years after publication of the *Sunday Times* article, Connolly died, bequeathing to Mr Fox his whole dossier. In proper Connollyesque manner, Fox believed that one more piece of evidence, one more interview, might do the trick. Back he went over the ground. His opening chapters evoke with mastery the hard upper-crust settlers in the Kenya of the 1920s. Happy Valley, where many of them lived, was a macabre euphemism. Sticky endings were the rule there, among a jostle of *déshabillé* peers and younger sons, remittance men and adventurers, some of them quite beyond any novelist's powers of invention.

Erroll was almost an enigma, with splendid though slightly petulant good looks. Capable of responsibility, he much preferred to stand on privilege. Expelled from Eton, he had run away to Kenya, to marry Lady Idina Gordon, who was older than himself. Their household was a by-word for nymphomania, drink, drugs and, for a brief while, fascism. Soon Erroll fell in love with another settler's wife, and quickly married and deserted her, whereupon she died of drugs.

"To hell with husbands" was Erroll's motto, and that no doubt was all he had in mind when he declared his passion to Diane Broughton. Like Erroll, Sir John Delves Broughton was not what he appeared. In his *Who's Who* entry, he had falsified the date of his birth, a tell-tale clue for Connolly. As a Brigade of Guards officer, he had a dash until the day in August 1914 when he was due to sail with his battalion to France. Then he claimed to have fallen ill with a mysterious sun-stroke, qualifying afterwards for a disability pension. Extravagance and gambling ate away his fortune. Trying to recoup through various sales of land, he cheated his trustees. He grew so afraid of loneliness after his first wife left him that he was ready to persuade Diana to

marry and leave for Kenya by signing a bizarre contract licensing her to do as she pleased.

Skilfully Fox closes the net; and journalistic scoops rewarded his persistence. Hugh Dickinson was revealed in have been a party to two insurance frauds perpetrated by Broughton on his own estate. During the visit to London, Diana Broughton, long since Lady Delamere, consented to speak to him and in a scene which has lost none of its drama in the telling, said that she supposed Broughton all along to have been the murderer.

Finally, Juanita Carberry revealed that Broughton had confessed to her while attending to the bonfire. Something sympathetic in her made him lower his guard. Perhaps he had been fantasizing, but her testimony sounds as conclusive as these things can ever be.

Exhaustion overtook the euphoria Fox felt at this point. He had discovered what there was to be discovered. Like a storm, the obsession had blown itself out. Connolly would have wanted to puzzle out quite why Juanita Carberry had kept back her story when he had interviewed her, but he could only have been pleased that the longing for the fullest knowledge had been finally satisfied with such devotion and elegance.

Far from reaching generalizations about the upper classes and imperialism or whatever, a book about these events could only have turned out as this one has, as reportage or, if you like, superior games-playing. The one and only thing to have been proved in that Erroll and Broughton were exceptionally well matched in their moral singular. Could anything imaginative, or even darkly salacious, ever have been created out of this? The reality behind the case, like much else, fell a long way short of Connolly's ambitions.

Tom Sharpe VINTAGE STUFF

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Secker & Warburg

The perils of ambition

J. A. Guy

JASPER RIDLEY

The Statesman and the Fanatic: Thomas Wolsey and Thomas More 336pp. Constable. £12.50. 0 09 46370 X

Thomas Wolsey and Thomas More were equals and opposites. Both became lord chancellor to Henry VIII; both paid the heaviest price of ambition. Wolsey was vainglorious and ruthless, yet optimistic and relatively tolerant; More was ascetic and introspective, pessimistic and a persecutor. Wolsey became a cardinal legate in France; More remained an eminent layman. Wolsey's flair, ultimately, was for religious policy; More's was for religious polemics. Neither could entirely satisfy their king. Wolsey died miserably, but privately, and in the nick of time; More died in the glare of European publicity, a reluctant martyr to conscience and papal primacy. Both men possess importance for the Catholic Church; both fascinate historians.

Jasper Ridley's double biography draws the similarities and the contrasts, but the message is clear: Wolsey was a statesman, More a fanatic. Not for a century have the issues been so robustly defined. In 1888 Mandell Creighton declared Wolsey's pragmatism to be his unique achievement. Twenty years before, J. A. Froude had deplored the "fanaticism" of Sir Thomas More, under whose philosophic mercies "the state" recommenced its hateful activity.

Modern historical scholarship has expanded the focus, but Ridley returns to the Victorian framework with raleth and bravado. His portrait of Wolsey is recognizable, readable and essentially valid, even if excessively based on diplomatic history. The Cardinal

exulted in state papers and complex negotiations, untidily of Calais and Bruges in 1521; the means here justified the ends. Beginning as the brilliant administrator of Henry VIII's early war supplies, Wolsey took command of England's diplomacy in an age when glory was won on the battlefield, and ardour was kindled by armies on the march. As legate in France, as well as Henry's prime minister, Wolsey enjoyed an unrivalled position, his power, prestige and credibility; his influence was matched only by that of the Emperor Charles V. Yet manipulation was the name of the game; England was at war with France, then the architect of perpetual peace. She was next at war again with France in alliance with Spain; then at war with Spain in support of France. Sieges, parleys, truces and treaties dazzled - but the sack of Rome in 1527 was decisive. Wolsey's silken web of intrigue would destroy its creator: with Pope Clement VII subject to dominant imperial influence, Wolsey could not achieve Henry VIII's divorce from Catherine of Aragon, who was the Emperor's aunt. The Cardinal's fate was sealed.

Ridley judges Wolsey's diplomacy as impressive. Many historians today would deem it simply dull - certainly it was an expensive failure, for England was isolated from the peace-making at Cambrai in 1529. It is a matter of opinion whether statesmanship can be a speculative success. What is less speculative is the undoubted relevance of Wolsey's domestic policy to the discussion. Even Creighton devoted a whole chapter to the topic, but Ridley curiously avoids it. Wolsey's reforms of the Household and Council are surprisingly omitted; there is but a whisper of the cataclysmic consequences for the English Church of his papal legacy. The manipulation of domestic political faction by Wolsey is barely described - his success there was as signal as anything achieved by his continental diplomacy. Wolsey's

invention, with another, of the progressive Tudor and Stuart subsidy of 1334 likewise goes unmentioned. So does the impressive consensus of England's military and financial capacity (1522), of crime and disorder (1526) and of food supplies and population (1527). The Cardinal's policies on enclosures, and in Star Chamber and Chancery, are summarized, if blandly. Yet the account is not free of errors. Wolsey was not the sole judge in Chancery; he did not personally decide the 7,500 equity cases filed under him; he did not sit in Chancery only on Sundays.

We have every reason to believe that Wolsey's domestic, as much as foreign, policy articulated his statesmanship. Ridley has at a stroke reduced the scale, and cumulative impact, of Wolsey's operations by half. His one-dimensional interpretation stands; but Wolsey's stature is unquestionably diminished, his genius sadly confined.

More succeeded Wolsey as lord chancellor, but his opposition to the king's divorce precluded him from prime ministerial rank. With Henry VIII's consent, More resolved to serve in "other things" - top of his list being the extermination of heresy. Despite the elusive tolerance of *Utopia*, More hated heresy and persecuted Protestants. He castigated Luther, Tyndale, Fish, Frith and the "anonymous" Sir John Some-say, who was Christopher St German, with pungent, and obscene, polemics. He used Star Chamber to enforce strict religious censorship, banning the import into England of all foreign books on any subject whatsoever. In 1530 he frustrated the projected English Bible - when even the reactionary Henry VIII favoured the reform. Above all, More immersed himself in detecting and interrogating suspected heretics, and he was thus responsible vicariously, as deleter, and more directly, as supervisor of his secular arm under the heresy laws, for

the terrible deaths of those Protestants burned at the stake. More stood for the Catholic cause and, ultimately, papal primacy. Ridley positively flaunts his abhorrence of More's mistaken ideals, but ministers and cruel methods, yet his version is incomplete, for he fails to penetrate the overriding objective of More's moral crusade. More's desire was to save souls; he believed that obstinate heresy was the cancer of Christian society, and that surgery alone could protect healthy souls from infection. Twentieth-century morality knows that More was wrong. Yet in the England of the 1530s, his offence was merely excessive zeal by comparison with his clerical predecessor, Wolsey: the King's Council investigated every murmur against More prior to his trial in 1535, but found nothing to add to his indictment.

In the end, More died for the dogma of papal primacy, for he had come to believe that the papacy was a divine institution. And it is not true, as Ridley claims, that More refused the oath of succession because he would not swear to uphold Henry VIII's divorce, even though he had made statements to the House of Lords in its favour. More's objection was always to the preamble of the Act of Succession, which denounced papal authority as a usurpation of Henry VIII's "imperial" power. Cranmer suggested that More be permitted to swear to the body of the act, without the preamble - but Henry refused.

Ridley's attack on More is consistently maintained, and the full panoply of academic pedantry could be mustered in criticism of such opinions as that More was "an unscrupulous liar"; that he outdid his fellow-persecutors "in malice"; thanks, apparently, to a religious cult complex; that his anti-heretical writings were "the scribbles of a dirty-minded schoolboy on a lavatory wall"; that he "forged a letter"; that he would resort "to any means" in Henry

VIII's service; and that he "fawned on Wolsey" and "acted as a hoots", then callously promoted Cardinal's murder by all means of the first session of the Reformation Parliament. To take up the question of More's relationship with Wolsey, which has obvious implications for his double biography, we are told that More was eager to curry favour, that he was polite, was deferential, to Wolsey, and that he "men at Court". However, if More was Wolsey's sycophant, there is evidence to the contrary. More in 1522; he pleaded for peace before the Council in 1525, defying Wolsey; More enjoyed no real power before 1529, and this was precisely because he was not Wolsey's henchman, but because he was no pillar of the Cardinal's régime.

Robert Whittington's encomium for More was "a mass for all seasons" applies equally to Thomas Wolsey and Thomas More. As Ridley concludes, both men can be imagined holding public office in the twentieth century. Wolsey was the vainglorious power-politician, and this aspect of his profile is well delineated. More was an embattled idealist, the virtuous turned conscientious objector. As Ridley rightly argues, More's record was certainly not the product of immaculate conception depicted by his son-in-law William Roper; we must avoid making More a saint too soon. But too many of Ridley's own so-called "facts" are simply value-judgments in disguise. His case for the prosecution does not convince. One does not have to be a Catholic to respect More: a man prepared to suffer for his ever "truth" behind discovered power, posterity that, for him, at least, the truth was not illusory. Yet the matter is ultimately controversial: the fair arbitration must be left to readers.

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The reputation of a great dictator

Norman Del Mar

DENIS MATTHEWS

Arturo Toscanini
With selected discography by
Ray Burford

176pp. Tunbridge Wells: Midas
Books. £9.50.
0 85936 1721

It should be said at once that this book is an excellent and thoroughly well-presented example of its kind. The biographical matter is, to the best of my knowledge, well researched and commendably exhaustive. There are also some splendid photographs of the great maestro, both formal and intimate.

But it is with the genre itself that I am, as so often, out of sympathy; although generally a devotee of books dealing with the lives of creative artists, I tend to shy off adulatory biographies of performers. The author's standpoint of unqualified admiration is here largely to blame. Admittedly this falling may also be present in many composers' biographies, but rarely to the same extent, and there is a further crucial difference: unlike the work of the great creative artist, that of the interpreter is essentially ephemeral and his ultimate place in the hierarchy of his kind will depend upon whatever mystique has grown up around him. Recordings might be thought to perpetuate the performer's achievements but this is often an illusion and the reality can, on the contrary, be disturbing. If one listens with unprejudiced ears to, for example, the spate of LP dubbings recently released from tapes made of numerous Toscanini performances without his specific sanction. Often they do poor service to the memory of a conductor who has been held to be one of the greatest, sincerest and most dedicated artists who ever lived.

It was perhaps his misfortune that universal acclaim made such an idol of him. His image was hardly less than alarming: he was the unique example of an interpreter who was absolutely faithful to the composer's vision down to the very letter of the score; he was a terrifying personality - but only to the mediocre, to whom he could indeed be a tyrant in his selfless pursuit of the ideal, though with himself he was never satisfied and was heard to let fall touching words of self-abasement; and he was gifted with a prodigious memory.

This formidable list of characteristics needs, however, to be examined in detail. For although Toscanini's readings were certainly hailed in the 1930s for their refreshingly strict and objective approach, he was by no means invariably faithful to the printed score. Living in an age of self-indulgence which not only gave free rein to personalized interpretations but



Toscanini by Caruso

which accepted without undue alarm wholesale textual alterations, it is hardly surprising that Toscanini too indulged in it when it suited him: as did, for example, Mengelberg and Stokowski, although much less cavalierly than him. This was far from believed to be outside the ethic of the great maestro, but it is conceded by Denis Matthews as well as by his colleague Ray Burford (in his very comprehensive discography which is an important section of the book) although the point is lightly brushed aside by both as a wholly minor consideration. Whereas with many conductors this would be of relatively little importance, Toscanini's particular aura being what it was, the discovery came to needs full and unyielding discussion in any broad posthumous assessment of his art.

Then there is the matter of his reign of terror: for much of his career Toscanini enjoyed the unassailable position of musical dictator. He was very much of his generation in this respect and by no means unique in his ruthless treatment of players, many of whose nerves, and hence careers, he

destroyed by his antics: the shouting, the baton-breaking and so on. Behaviour of this kind is no longer expected from the conductor in his relationship with orchestras; but the fact that the legends concerning Toscanini's tantrums are still recounted with such admiration, as marks of his very genius, is another area which needs exposure and a balanced view taken in the light of hindsight.

No doubt Toscanini was tortured by a sense of inadequacy both in himself and his players; but to quote in reverential terms his acknowledged "I am myself sometimes terrible" in performances of, say, the Choral Symphony, is naive. Of course he was dissatisfied with himself, as is every performer of quality, but such humility can appear ingenuous in the mouth of a musician of acknowledged pre-eminence who may not be above showing off, perhaps, with an all too human desire for reassurance from the surrounding sycophants.

It has long been known that Toscanini's habit of always conducting from memory was the result of his excessively poor eyesight. By dint of his unchallenged authority as a prince of conductors this initiated a vogue and it became required of all first-rank conductors to do likewise. This became for a time so mandatory that it distorted and even damaged many a career and indeed the integrity of the very art itself.

Toscanini did have a prodigious memory; like Georges Enesco he had from childhood possessed the extraordinary ability to recite back long passages after only one reading.

But at the same time it does not from all accounts seem to have been the total recall of, for example, Mitropoulos who was gifted with a perfect photographic memory - the latter partially developed during his years spent within a monastery. Mitropoulos's memorized repertoire, therefore, was virtually unlimited; Toscanini's, though large and including operas with which he had been familiar all his life, could not be so comprehensive. One would therefore have greatly valued some insight into the ways - arduous no doubt - by which over the years he strove to add to it.

While Toscanini's star quality may reasonably be allowed to stand undimmed, it seems out of order to pretend that all his performances were of uniformly sterling quality. I always remember Professor Matthews commenting that in the opening of Brahms's Tragic Overture Toscanini made it sound like "Damn... Blast" where other conductors only played it as "There... there". Yet "Damn... Blast" was not what Brahms had meant to say; it was too ferocious and out of style. Similarly recordings reveal many of Toscanini's performances to have been ill-balanced, of a hard timbre, and relentless to a degree. The orchestra plays for all it is worth, often as if demerited. In the hall at the time the experience of each concert must have been electrifying; perpetuated on disc the results are often disastrous.

There is another falling of which Matthews and Burford are guilty which rears its ugly head again and again in the book but especially, of course, in the chapter "Toscanini and the Critics". It does ill service to a great artist to treat all adverse criticism as if it

were sacrilegious: "One Beecham supporter could have us believe," says Ray Burford dismissively, "that Toscanini's reading of Rossini's Overture La Scala di San Pietro was a masterpiece of steel, not of silk," and goes on to disparage Beecham's over-enthusiastic reading. But the remark rebuffs itself, for whatever view one may take of Beecham's diametrically opposite approach, the attack on Toscanini remains justified.

It is only in the handful of recordings made in the earlier days of the 1920s and 1930s, on the very few occasions when Toscanini could be persuaded into the studio that one does get a fleeting impression of what he must have been like in his days of greatest maturity and humanity. But this makes one the more regretful that in Ray Burford's over-enthusiastic discography a sharper distinction is not made between these two recordings and the very many dubbings made of Toscanini's performances of the later years.

Denis Matthews has always been a whole-hearted admirer of Toscanini and this book clearly is, as he himself says, a labour of love. Each phase of the fabulous career is gloriously recounted in detail, coloured by the expressions of astonished admiration of the great international singers, soloists and composers. But the picture is too one-sided and as a result fails to bring to life either the artist or the music. Nevertheless this is, within its own terms of reference, a splendid and well-documented tribute to a man whom many still remember as the unchallengeable doyen of conductors.

Glimpses of essential impurity

Paul Driver

HANS WERNER HENZE

Music And Politics: Collected
Writings 1933-81

286pp. Faber. £15.
0 571 11719 8

This is an admirably produced, fluently translated collection of Henze's writings in prose - in the form of lectures, essays and programme notes - and (a good many) edited interviews over the past three decades. Some of the pieces are mere snippets, others substantial essays on aesthetics; the less theoretical ones tend to be engagingly and even stylishly written; the range is wide and includes music that is valuable anecdotal. The whole is intended by the publisher to stimulate "a positive re-evaluation of Henze's works in the English-speaking world".

It certainly makes one try. The Henze persona that comes through is so likable and so reasonably enthusiastic that one racks one's conscience for a just evaluation. Yet there is an unshakeable conviction that Henze's music can never quite have a positive place in musical tradition. It isn't sufficiently itself for that; no single item of his vast and growing oeuvre carries a full impress of personality in the "definitive" way in which every product of Stravinsky's pen, however slight, was utterly his. A bitter paradox, for Henze is certainly one of the lavishly endowed talents of the century, as good at composing as Mahler and with an ambition and apparent sense of responsibility that ought to have secured his greatness. Like Mahler he indulges a bewildering array of influences and styles but unlike him he does not make a specific musical virtue of cross-reference and inclusiveness. The result is a blurred boundary, where for all his freedom of eclecticism and *poesia impura*, for all the passing felicity of his writing, the ear and the memory cannot register essential musical points. (The huge Second Piano Concerto, for example, eludes my grasp after more than a decade of struggle.)

These chapters sometimes betray the same lack of certainty and confidence (attributes which can also be variously interpreted as naivety and

loneliness) that underlines the music. Henze's very air of dedication, his suspect. He is too intent on pursuing the conventional paths and adopting the conventional manners of greatness; he exposes himself too dutifully to the "right" sort of aesthetic influences and political anxieties. On many pages he flourishes exaltation bouquets of source-material or analogies for his compositions; these flowers have an artificial feel. Elsewhere his dismayed sympathy for political victims ("I suffered with my black friends but didn't know what I should do") is more precisely known. Even the lack of pretension which distinguishes all but the theoretical stuff rings false. Stravinsky (to cite again a master for whom Henze is in every way nostalgic) was full of it. But the path he carved was novel; nobody ever knew where he was going, but now Henze is going there too.

Henze is in his way starstruck and perhaps he has also remained psychologically unsettled by early experiences in Nazi and post-war Germany. (The opening autobiographical sketch, frank and revealing, is the best thing in the book, throughout which Henze rightly never loses an opportunity to draw attention to the insidious persistence of fascism in Germany in times when it has become *passé* to raise the subject at all.) In his case trauma has had a different rather than the reverse effect on the development of genius, as was confirmed later when during a crisis of identity and conscience he joined Rudi Dutschke's New Left in the mid-1960s and began to squander his creative talents over more recklessly in works like *The Rest of the Medium*. Much discussion and gossip has been provoked by Henze's radicalization but I do not think its significance was other than that of a symptom. He is unchanged by it, only his rhetoric has changed. The overtly political statements in this book do not deny Henze a stick of his previous creative fervour; his enhanced (if by now outlived) style. In spite of the manifesto-like titles of the political chapters, their content is largely anecdotal and descriptive.

The theoretical issue that runs through the book like a leaf on a stream (over to be grasped) concerns the possibility of defining and creatively exploiting a musical semantics. Henze, like Deryck Cooke, is convinced that

instrumental music, with or without texts (and never to be denigrated "abstract"), communicates through a specific number of "signs" about whose strength rests on the fact that they have deeply impressed themselves on human consciousness. This credo, chiefly articulated in the chapter "Art and the Revolution" and the essay "Signs" (as also in Henze's preface to recent London concert of his latest works), informs every aspect of his thinking - his defiance from the outset of Darmstadt serial orthodoxy, his belief in the essential "impurity" of music where any means should be used to facilitate communication, his love of such impurity as pertaining directly to a Marxist aesthetic. It is tantalizingly unexpended; although Henze would naturally prefer to develop his theory through his continuing practice.

A great deal of space is given to useful commentaries on Henze's operas - two each on *König Lear* and *Begley for Young Love*, three each on *Der junge Lord* and *The Bassariki*. Much can be gleaned from them; but the ballet *Orpheus* and *Orpheus* as well as the pieces of committed "political music" like *El Cimarrón* and *Huesos Ungeheuer*, receive ample and enlightening explanation. If *The Mosaic of Music* (1959) represents an extreme of unreadability (a hard lecture incorporating an enormous and impenetrable quotation from Hegel), the chapter on the Montepulciano Cantieri, 1976-80, finds Henze delightfully chatty and informative. His appreciations of Paul Dessau, Benjamin Britten and Virgil Maier are interesting; the little programme-note on Mahler brilliant of its kind. An early newspaper statement - headed "Wavering and Possibilities" (1957) - puts a neat case for himself: "My certainty lies in my wavering. My wavering is an ambivalence about a world that has populated itself with people whose papers are all in order." I almost believe that.

Alfred Brendel's *Musical Thought and Afterthoughts* has recently been released in paperback (1980). It is a book of 235 pages, 0 85051 157 1. It includes chapters on Beethoven's and Schubert's piano sonatas, and essays on Liszt and of Bartók, as well as reminiscences of Brendel's teacher Edwin Fischer.

LEON EDEL

Stuff of Sleep and Dreams:
Experiments in Literary Psychology
152pp. Chatto and Windus. £15.
0 7011 39056

"Franz Kafka used to say that writing was a form of prayer. Of course this is not so for most writers, but it was for him, and his saying this tells us a good deal about his troubles." The import of Leon Edel's latest book is that few writers find it possible to say anything at all without telling us their troubles. Even their little jokes and omissions give them away. Auden, for example, may have thought that he was mocking the anxiety of his readers, but "the way in which he does it tells us a great deal about his problems."

"If we pierce any artist's legend", Edel claims, "we discover an all-too-mortal human." Piercing the artist, he discovers an all-too-trobled legend. The legend is called "literary psychology".

Literary psychology seeks the emotions and the *persona* within the work as distinct from the person of the artist. It is an attempt to study the metamorphoses of the unconscious materials of literary art into conscious image and symbol; and the metamorphoses of fancy into the finished work shaped by language and tradition.

The finished work re-imagines or re-creates the troubles of the life, and thus enables the writer to come to terms with them.

We remember Freud's account of a game played by his grandson, in which the child compensated himself for the absence of his mother by staging the disappearance and return of objects within his reach. "At the outset he was in a passive situation - he was overpowered by the experience; but, by repeating it, unpleasurable though it was, as a game, he took on an active part." Edel characterizes the work of Thomas, Kipling, Joyce, T. S. Eliot, Virginia Woolf, Willa Cather and others as a kind of cathartic game, a way of mastering traumatic experiences.

It is a powerful legend, ambitions in scope yet accessible to common experience. Edel means, I think, to test both his explanatory power and his aesthetic power. How much does it explain about the process of selection and reproduction which transforms unconscious motive into poem or novel? And even if it cannot be shown to explain anything, does it contribute to the pleasure we take in literature? The first initiative requires the legend to produce hypotheses which can be tested against the available literary and psychological evidence. The second aims to re-enact an article of faith, but insists that it is a more useful article of faith than some others.

Edel often settles for the second and less arduous initiative. Even so, he does make large claims for the status of literary psychology as a discipline. "It is," he says, "the very secret of method: it takes some of us closer to scientific literary truth than any method we have found so far." Perhaps, but it may leave the rest of us wanting to know how it will cope with two crucial problems: the identification of unconscious motive, and the description of the way in which unconscious motive becomes language and form.

The psychological evidence from which we can deduce unconscious motive is said to include "dreams, imaginings, and observed human actions." Some chapters of *Stuff of Sleep and Dreams* are therefore essays in biography. Others are essays in biography based upon reflections on the lives of other children: looking "them out of the house (Kafka's father), taking them to visit ponds (Thomas's mother), living in hotels (Henry James's father), dying (Julia Stephen).

So far as the evidence concerns dreams and imaginings, literary psychology exceeds biography. But one may doubt whether it always exceeds biography in the direction of

scientific literary truth. Edel seems to think that it is possible to identify an unconscious motive by making explicit what biographers have chosen to leave implicit. Unfortunately, though, his explicitness often produces emblems rather than oetiologies. Take, for example, his treatment of sexual imaginings.

An earlier book, *Bloomsbury: A House of Lions*, had contained the gratifyingly emblematic Lytton Stroeche, a precocious satyr in girl's clothing: "under those petticoats there was a proud and active phallus; even if the child looked increasingly as if he would be a Victorian spinster." This sudden vision of popping seams is both too much and too little. It jars with the otherwise sedate narrative, making explicit what we could have imagined for ourselves. And yet it explains nothing.

Stuff of Sleep and Dreams offers Auden's dreams of castration and Eliot's dance about masturbation (in "The Death of Saint Narcissus", as it happens). It also proposes to "illuminate" the psychopathology of James Joyce by citing passages from letters he wrote to Nora - "Krafft-Ebbing perversions", warns Edel, "nauseating" to some readers, a "wallowing in excrement", "erotic sickness". "The sensitive civilized reader will cry Enough!" he concludes, after two lengthy quotations from letters in which Joyce's sexual imagining of his wife does not confine itself to the missionary position.

These quotations are so carefully framed by commentary that they cannot fail to illuminate Edel's moral obsessions rather more than they do Joyce's psychopathology. They have been removed from their context - from the relationship which provoked and assimilated them - in order to serve as emblems of (Edel's perception of) Joyce's depravity. Indeed, the depravity spreads by implication to Richard Egan, who is imagined for publishing the letters and for trying to pass them off as literature. Yet Edmund's introduction to the *Selected Letters* is admirably sensitive not only to the difference between letters and novels, but to the reasons Joyce's scurrilous found in his life: "With Nora there was the possibility available to him nowhere else, of complete self-revelation, a great relief to a suspicious man". Edel may brandish his emblem, but it is Edmund who nukes the better attempt at an etiology.

If Edel's identification of unconscious motive seems shaky, so does his description of the way in which unconscious motive becomes language and form. Take the chapter on T. S. Eliot. Edel surely provides a suitable case for literary psychology, since his most famous poem was written during a personal crisis, and is generally assumed to re-enact that crisis. (Anyway, didn't the man write an essay called "Hamlet and His Problems"?)

Edel promises an "adumbration" of Eliot's crisis and its reworking as *The Waste Land*. On the whole he adumbrates rather less well than Lyndall Gordon has already done in *Eliot's Early Years*, a book he does not mention (although I was intrigued to find Ezra Pound cast as Eliot's father and mother). But there is a potentially significant change of emphasis. Whereas Gordon sees Eliot's crisis as mediated primarily by religious idiom, Edel proposes to explore the psychology of Roger Vittoz, who treated Eliot in Lausanne in November 1920. After all, Eliot wrote much of "What the Thunder Said" in Lausanne, and it would be interesting to know what he was actually doing there.

However, Edel confines himself to some gossip about Vittoz's ability to sense the brain waves of his patients simply by touching their foreheads. Ottoline Morrell, we learn, "had liked Vittoz's attitudinizing, his pose, his way of asking her to sort out her instincts". Perhaps these manoeuvres also had a soothing effect on what is referred to as "the Eliot selfhood". Perhaps Eliot's instincts (or "instincts") were sorted out, "with the result that he had a grip on himself once more".

Looking for trouble

David Trotter

Edel ignores the theory behind the banal practice, and so misses the point that Vittoz cannot have told Eliot anything he didn't already know. Vittoz held that the mind has two "working centres", subjective and objective, "the subjective brain is in a general way the source of the ideas and sensation, and... the objective brain in a sense 'focuses' them." Neurasthenia occurs when one working centre fails to focus the ideas and sensations produced by the other. Which could hardly have been news to the author of "Prufrock", or to the critic who spoke of the artist as an eye patiently observing himself as a man. The clinic at Lausanne must have seemed like a rest-home for Gerontions.

For the psychology of the time should not be considered as a science witnessing to the unique truth of an individual psyche, but as a collective representation, a legend by means of which a particular culture could tell itself its troubles. On more than one occasion the ideas of the artist found an echo in those of the psychologist. Eliot thought that this conjunction had helped to create a new kind of literature. "Psychology (such as it is, and whether our reaction to it be comic or serious), ethnology, and the Golden Bough have conspired," he wrote in 1923, "to make possible what was impossible even a few years ago."

In exploring the mediation of personal crisis by psychology, we should remember that its legitimacy was collective and historical, and that Eliot, for one, didn't know how seriously to take it.

Similar difficulties arise in another case where literary psychology might have hoped to succeed. Edel is in firm ground when he argues that Willa Cather's novel *The Professor's House* might be said to re-enact the sense of helplessness and betrayal she felt when her friend Isabelle McClung married the violinist Jan Hambourg. The biographical evidence is strong. I have no difficulty in following Edel when he suggests that the professor's loss of the will to live was Cather's, unexplained in the novel because she could not explain it herself; or when he suggests that the story of Tom Outland - a student of the professor who discovers an cave city in the high mean, but is robbed of his finds by a companion - re-enacts Cather's own sense of betrayal.

Even so, both characters have cultural as well as outbiographical resonances. Edel rebukes Cather's statement that "the world before in two in 1922 or thereabouts" entirely to a personal crisis. But the context of the statement, in the preface to *Not Under Forty*, makes it clear that the reference is to cultural crisis. The professor's loss of will and Outland's sense of betrayal echo off the representations of that larger crisis. The professor has something in common with Quatun von Aschenbach, Outland with Yeats's Robert Gregory. These figures reinforce each other to our mind, as they perhaps did in Cather's, and we need to recognize their cultural dimension.

I would not press the objection if Edel's analysis of unconscious motive had succeeded in illuminating the texture of the novel, I would not press it, for example, against John Carey's book on Dickens, *The Violent Effigy*. Carey underestimates the scope of Dickens's imagining of social process, his reliance on collective representations. But he nevertheless works backward and forward between the novels and obsessions revealed in events or letters until he has isolated patterns and qualities in the writing which we would not otherwise have noticed. He shows us a reason for Dickens's greatness. Edel, on the other hand, over-deploys to such effect the aesthetic power of the legend which connects creative impulse with obsession.

His psychological glosses tend to obscure rather than clarify. Thus we learn that the caves discovered by Tom Outland are "for him inviolate, and Outland are... for him a seemingly virgin untouched, like a seemingly virgin mother preserved from others, a mother of long ago, of the infant years, who belonged only to the child greedy

imagination ousted in favour of reportage or record".

No one could accuse Edel of flatfooted police work, since Joyce was in fact writing from Paris to ask his aunt whether "an ordinary person" could drop into the area of No 7 without getting hurt. Nor could one really accuse him of literary criticism, since he doesn't seem curious about the function of reportage within the novel as a whole. Was not reportage one of the idioms through which experience might have been articulated in Dublin in 1904? He simply takes it for granted that the imagination should not stoop to literalness.

The assumption reminds us that Edel has been the chronicler of a distinctly patrician strain in English and American literature - Henry James, Bloomsbury - and that he has held correspondingly extreme views about the remoteness of intellectual life from the mean and commonplace. "An intelligence," he once wrote of Maynard Keynes,

that leaps, soars and ruthlessly cuts a swath, if necessary, through the world's clutter; a particularly unpopular with the less gifted, for the commonplace is usually irrational... How can such an intelligence have patience with the sleepy woolgatherers, the eternal fumbler?

It is possible that Joyce's crime, in Edel's eyes, may not have been his egotisticality but his consorting with the eternal fumbler, with the plebeian literalness of police work.

At times his assessment of Joyce is contemptuous enough to recall that of Virginia Woolf, who thought *Ulysses* "underbred", the book of "a self taught working man" or "a queasy undergraduate scratching his pimples". Her attitude certainly had little to do with experiment, with literature, or with psychology.

The final irony is that Joyce himself should have been one of Edel's most notable precursors as a literary psychologist, maintaining enthusiastically that Shakespeare plays re-enact the troubles of his life. However, when Stephen Dedalus expounds these views in the National Library, they are placed as just one way among several of approaching literature. They impress, but they are certainly not the whole story. Mulligan jeers. Bloom remains safely out of earshot, while Stephen himself does not seem to have total confidence in them. "Do you believe your own theory?" - No, Stephen said promptly.

Volume Four of *Comparative Criticism: a yearbook*, edited by E. S. Shaffer, has recently been published (348pp. Cambridge University Press. £25. 0 521 24578 8). Among the contributors are Roger Scruton on "Public text and common reader", Sir Michael Tippett on "The Mark of Time: Work in progress", and Anthony Visis on *The Empress of Newfoundland* by Frank Wedekind.

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Queen of Stooes
160pp. Cape. £6.95.
0 224 02064 7

Queen of Stooes ends with a Shori Bibliography; and though the booklist is compiled by the narrator rather than the author, it gives a fair idea of the novel's concerns. There are books on psychology (Freud, Ferenczi) and on children's imaginative worlds (Bruno Bettelheim, the Opiates). Other books, unlisted, perhaps make a contribution: *Picnic at Hanging Rock*, surely (cinematic violence, sonchhow linked with menarche, ill-remembered by its participants) and *Lord of the Flies* (regressing isolated schoolchildren, human sacrifice).

The book's opening also makes appeal to the authority of print: it purports to reproduce an item from the *Bridport Advertiser* of October 19, 1981, with the headline "Missing Girls Fears Grow". There follows an "Author's Note" which offers sketches of the main characters, based on photographs given to the press by their parents.

The eldest, Bess, is thirteen, bright, beautiful and apparently stolid; the youngest girls, at six, are much more suggestible. But even Bess is profoundly affected when a dense fog, the worst ever recorded on the west coast of Dorset, separates her party

from the adult who is leading their sponsored walk.

The impressively circumstantial opening represents one pole of the novel's style, and is taken up by subsequent reports from psychiatrists and social workers. The other pole is a free fantasy, lucid but discontinuous, which turns the girls' experiences into a vivid series of threats and epiphanies. The greater part of the book is brilliantly suspended between these two styles, the mythical and the intuitive, and flirts boldly with a succession of genres (case-history, fairy story, dream diary, Gothic, thriller) without tying itself down.

Eventually, the girls reach the Isle of Portland, and can go no further: the shifts of power within the group become more extreme and more disturbed. The intercut reports by psychiatrists and social workers strongly suggest that there are destructive forces lying in wait; Bess has a history of hysterical symptoms, while nine-year-old Melanie Ayres has been a focus of poltergeist activity. The book moves with great excitement towards the violent death promised by the Author's Note. Who will be struck down? And who will strike? Bess? Melanie? Mary and Mathilda, the sinister twins? Fey, withdrawn Nat Minge?

It is at this point that the excitement so cleverly generated begins to disperse. The book abandons its games with genre and settles down to become a thriller. It loses much by doing so; the manipulative pleasures of a thriller are achieved at the expense of the

consistent focus demanded by a case-history.

The novel remains Freudian in its ideas about human behaviour; though the character of the retired analyst Dr Ross is mildly ridiculed, his conclusions are upheld. But as the story proceeds, the girls seem less and less plausible a group, and the whole project runs into difficulties. Freud's innovation, after all, was not the suggestion that people in extreme situations behave irrationally, but that there is an element of extremity in all behaviour, and a kind logic to mental events. In his case-histories he was able to show that the smallest gestural symptom was part of a lifelong drama. Emma Tennant's procedure in this book is essentially the opposite: she dramatizes what is already dramatic, and ends up creating mysteries instead of revealing them.

The book's climactic atrocity is also a compromise between exegesis and mystification. The motives are properly symbolic, as befits a case-history; but there must be a twist in the tail, if a thriller is to thrill to the end, and so neither the murderer nor the victim are the expected candidates for their roles.

The result is an abrupt and disastrous relaxation of tension. The book moves into high rhetorical gear, but disengages the reader; and the subtle workings of the unconscious mind (so remarkably conveyed by the book for much of its length) are finally abandoned in favour of the coarser substitutions and displacements of thriller technique.

Eloquently attending

Idris Parry

ROBERT WALSER

Selected Stories: with a foreword by Susan Sontag
Translated by Christopher Middleton and others
194pp. Manchester: Carcanet New Press. £6.95.
0 85635 3701

The short pieces which form the bulk of Robert Walser's work first appeared in journals (if he was lucky). They were disliked by a considerable number of indignant readers and admired by a few, including Franz Kafka. People who "knew about literature" objected not only to the apparent triviality of his writing but also to the absurdity of his themes. As for narrative continuity, he had obviously never heard of it. His work seemed too childish for serious consideration. Only the clear-sighted realized that here was that rare phenomenon, a man who looks at life for himself. It never occurred to Walser to accept meanings handed down as protection against fear.

Christopher Middleton has been working for nearly thirty years to communicate his enthusiasm for this writer. He found, to our profit, that the process of translating is a sure way to deeper understanding. He has published a fine English version of Walser's novel *Jacob von Gunten* (University of Texas Press, 1969) and now, with Tom Whalen and other collaborators, he offers a selection

from the mass of shorter pieces. Four of his own versions have been published before, in *The Walk and Other Stories* (John Calder, 1957), but make a welcome reacquaintance with the book, especially as "The Walk" can be taken as a key work: it contains all that is necessary to understand Walser's attitude and consequent method.

Walser goes for a walk and talks about it. More truthfully, Walser sits in his room and talks about going for a walk. It does not matter that he is in his head, part of the novel taking place in his head, part of the complete man and so an expression of the complete man. It is as much a ramble through memory and along pathways of language as among the features of an actual landscape. He creates an individual landscape of experience. There seems no purpose or direction; it is, he says, "more a question of a delicate, gentle walk than of a voyage or excursion, more of a subtle circular stroll than a forced march". Obviously not for readers who must have conclusions.

The walk flows but seems to be disconnected, like human experience. These separate sections are like the many separate fragments of Walser's writings which may seem disconnected but are really, he tells us in another place, chapters of a novel which he is always working, a novel about himself. What looks like discontinuity is itself evidence of unprejudiced observation. This is how life appears to him.

Walser says that on this walk - we can call it his progress through life - the observer must suppress egotistic impulses, his private complaints; and so he comes to his persistent theme of humility (no wonder he appealed to Kafka): "He must be able to bow down and sink into the deepest and smallest everyday thing." Perhaps it is this appeal to suppress the self, hardly a new doctrine, which offended readers who belonged to what Walser described in another story as "the impotence of a rational world". Definitions are impossible when the subject rejects power, principally the power to judge. It is disturbing to be reminded that our conclusions are provisional.

This writer seems to go through life constantly surprised, sharing the open experience of poets. The history of literature tells us how perilous that condition can be. There is in this book, in the piece called "Kleist in Tübingen", a marvellous evocation of the despair and delight caught from personal surroundings by the sensitive writer. Kleist or Walser, the one who has himself, the other who resigns from himself, Walser so often speaks with the evident excitement of a writer who has found in the visible world a form which exactly matches his mood. "Kleist in Tübingen" is a mood, an imaginative triumph, one of many in this most interesting collection.

Christopher Middleton has not elsewhere that the translator of Walser must read both the original and the translation aloud if he is to grasp anything of his task. What this implies is that the surfeit of Walser's prose is as physical as that of poetry. These translations are not and cannot be Walser, but they do provide a remarkable echo. Walser's work should be read as poetry, which is the way he read the world around him. He deserves to be treated with the curiosity he brought to his own surroundings.

The last piece in this book gives us his thoughts on Cézanne. It makes a fine conclusion, because he could be talking about himself when he says of the painter that the "dilemma he contemplated became eloquent".

C. J. Koch's novel *Across the Sea* was first published in 1965, has recently been reissued in a revised version (141pp. Angus and Robertson, £3.20 707 14442 7). The novel portrays the love affair of Lisa Kalinin, a Latvian showgirl and a refugee from post-war Europe, and Robert O'Brien, a young Australian making the pilgrimage to Europe; the couple meet on board ship and travel to India together. The author comments of his revisions: "cuts and alterations are not fundamental, but they are necessary. My hope is now that the earlier readers of this work will be convinced of its value."

Silently mending

Gabriel Josipovici

ABRAHAM APPELFELD

The Age of Wonders
Translated by Darya Bilu
270pp. Nodas and Godine
45 Blackfriars Road, London S.E.1.
£6.95.
0 87923 402 4

This is a marvellous and disturbing book. From the opening sentence - "Many years ago Mother and I took the night train home from the quiet, little-known retreat where we had spent the summer" - *The Age of Wonders* works at a level which is so close to one that it is difficult to take one's bearings in relation to it. Yet, unlike Kafka's work, of which this could also be said, it is, on the surface, perfectly straightforward and easily summarized. The book is divided into two parts: the first deals with the family of a Jewish-Austrian writer on the eve of the Second World War, seen from the point of view of the writer's twelve-year-old son; the second part the son returns, thirty years later, to the town where he grew up, and notes what has changed and what has remained the same.

Having said that, though, one has hardly said anything at all. Why, for example, is the first part in the town of Vienna and the second in the third? And why does the son of the writer (the child of the Part I?) could Bruno not be imagining a past for himself, or meditating on the past of someone else? Or could it not be that it is Part II which consists only of thoughts and imaginings, perhaps Bruno's as he moves about his adopted home, lonely, wondering what return would be like?

These are not idle questions, for this book, as the opening sentence suggests, is just as much about our relation to ourselves - our past, future and present selves - as it is a *recherche de temps perdu*. And just as the opening sentence of Proust's novel miraculously incorporates all his major themes, so here, in those few simple words, we already have the book in embryo: the boy's closeness to his mother; the train journeys which are to prove more and more useless and futile until, as the last sentence of Part I has it, "the next day we were on the cattle train hurtling south"; and, finally, the question, never resolved, of where precisely this memory is coming from, in space and in time. As with Proust, the status of the person remembering is impossible to determine, because like Proust's this is a book about continuity in memory in the body; of the body in time; and of humanity through the generations - for, as we are reminded in the second part, when the fathers have eaten sour grapes it is the teeth of the sons that are set on edge.

Part I is in a sense a rewriting, in a more personal vein, of Appelfeld's *Behemoth* 1939 (and what a fine job the translator has done with both books). Like that novel this deals with Austria, and especially with the Jews in Austria, on the eve of the Second World War. Appelfeld has no illusions about the way people behave under stress. The most terrible scenes here are not those depicting Austrian anti-Semitism, but those which show the Jews turning on each other, the intellectuals blaming the intellectuals for their "decadence".

Until, in the climactic scene of Part I, as the Jews wait in the temple for the trucks to load, they turn on the rabbi and first beat, then assault and torture him. But Appelfeld is no cynic. Rather, he gets from this book the same sense of wisdom as we get from Kafka's conversations with Janouch or Rosenzweig's letters from the Eastern wilderness in the First World War. This wisdom consists in the recognition of the weakness of men in the face of terror and suffering, but a recognition that men are capable of noble responses, which must be celebrated and which implicitly indict the failures of the Jews. Yet it is not moral judgments

that are being made. In the end, we feel, people are not merely better, but happier for having had the strength to make certain decisions, not merely less good but unhappier for having made others.

And *The Age of Wonders* is a book about decisions, responsibilities. As that opening sentence hints, it is in the first place about the child's emergence from the paradisaical world of irresponsibility into the baffling world of adolescence, where adults are suddenly seen as weak, frightened and uncertain, and where the adolescent is forced to recognize that he has only himself to depend on. Here, again as in Proust, the transition involves the child's sudden awareness of his parents' mortality, combined with a growing awareness of sex, of bodily desires which as yet seem to have no focus. But of course it differs radically from Proust in that we are not in the France of 1880 but the Austria of 1937, a time and a place where it is becoming more and more difficult to evade responsibility.

A large number of servants, friends and relatives pass through the book, bent on self-protection, escape, even self-sacrifice, hounding the weak, turning a blind eye to what is really going on. But it is on the narrator's immediate family that the book focuses. The mother is mainly a silent, increasingly unhappy presence, though Appelfeld wonderfully manages to convey the bond between her and the child. Her death, which, like nearly all the deaths in this book, happens in the space between the two parts, is mentioned only in passing. "From then on until the day she died I did not see a soft line on her face." In contrast to her silence and submissiveness is the father's frantic activity. Friend of Brod and Zweig, admirer of the still barely-known Kafka, a complex, tormented man whose talent is sadly not equal to his ambitions, he starts out as a universally respected Austrian writer and ends ostracized by the establishment, his spirit broken. We just see him deserting his wife and escaping to Vienna to mingle with an aristocratic salon in the hope of getting a liberal intellectual journal started, though everyone can see that the time for such ventures is long past.

How much self-deception is involved here? Though he is right to go on protesting, in refusal to see himself in racial terms (Isn't anxiety, after all, a human trait, he asks an antisemitic who claims you can always tell a Jew by the anxiety written on his face), right to go on insisting that he is a man and a writer first, and then a Jew, his responses come to seem more and more inadequate to the events which overtake him. Perhaps for all of us there is a time when it becomes a matter of either accepting history or trying to escape it. In this instance, for him as for so many others, to accept one's Jewishness meant accepting one's humanity, one's existence in this precise time and place, and the denial of that meant a denial of life. Escape, in any case, may never be possible, as Jonah discovered. In Part II we are briefly told that the father probably died, mad, in Theresienstadt.

In this second part Bruno, himself escaping from a childless and unhappy marriage ("her parents", he says of his wife, "had bequeathed to her too much suffering. They had met in Auschwitz. The year after the liberation, Mina was born."), seizes the excuse of renewed interest in his father's work in Austria to revisit the town of his birth. Through him we experience the strangeness of seeing the very houses that had witnessed the events of 1939-45 still standing as though nothing had happened. For those with a memory, however, the only way of describing the present is by the words which form the title of Part II: "Many years later when everything was over, but it is also life itself. The Jews he comes across, who converted, married their housekeepers or in some other way kept alive, seem to be ghosts who have gone on moving but who, with the denial of their roots, have given up any real reason for living. And even among those who died there are gradations. Bruno, we sense, has less respect for the vet and his wife who hanged themselves rather than be deported

than he has for the four brothers who, though converts, took their place at the crucial moment in the temple with the other Jews.

What then of Bruno himself? In a sense he too is a ghost. It is true that he was born just late enough to have been spared the need for choices. Yet the book is clearly about his own attempts to bring together the scattered and repressed parts of himself. Does he succeed? In the town he finds nothing of importance relating to either himself or his father. He talks to a few people, pursues a few others, ends, uncharacteristically, by beating up an old renegade Jew on a park bench when the latter insults him and tells him to go away and not take up old embers. But the book offers no answers. The trip has not been a success, but it has not been a failure either. It may even not have taken place at all. At the end of Part II, as at the start, Bruno finds himself speaking words that do not seem to be his, as he stands waiting for the inevitable train, "empty of thought or feeling".

Yet of course something has happened. What Bruno has tried to destroy in himself was the memory of his father, out of shame at his treachery; but part of the reason for this repression, we are made to feel, is that Bruno has not sorted out whether the treachery was to his mother (and so to himself) or to humanity. And for him even to think of returning implies a change in his attitude: "He gave his father no credit at all. But in recent years, perhaps because he himself was already approaching his father's age, he felt the old wretched shame swelling inside him in a different way, no longer hatred but a kind of distance and even wonder."

That distance must be seen in two ways. It is negative, a distance from himself, an inability to link the "I" of his childhood with the "he" of the present, and so to make sense of either. But it is also positive, for with the recognition of this distance, which is both the first experience the book records and its secret cause, comes the possibility of renewal, of mending the broken halves.

And this is the measure of the book's greatness. The gap between the first and second parts and the disorientating switch from first to third person is not a clever formal device. It is what makes the book possible: for only by recognising that there is a gap, an unspeakable, unimaginable time "in-between", can the healing process start.

Implicitly, the way this book is written is a condemnation of those authors, Jewish and Gentile, who, in the past few years, have made use of the events of 1940-45 for their own private purposes. Appelfeld's silence admonishes them - and us. Each man of course must sort it out with his own conscience; Appelfeld at least is clear that the real difficulty, human and artistic, is how both not to write and not to pass over in silence. For to write a story about these terrible events,



Hilfer, in a Roman toga, emerging from the grave of Richard Wagner. The screenplay of Syberberg's seven-hour film will be published on December 2 (translated by Jonathan Newson). 267pp. Carcanet. £9.95. 0 85635 405 8. In her preface to the book, Susan Sontag writes: "Like Mann, Syberberg regards Nazism as the grotesque fulfilment - and betrayal - of German Romanticism... Syberberg proposes that we really listen to what Hitler said - to the kind of cultural revolution Nazism was, or claimed to be; to the spiritual catastrophe it was, and still is."

however admirable one's motives, debases them; to use those events for mythological purposes, as so many novelists seem to do, is to go on playing the Nazi game. Appelfeld's is an exercise in demythologizing, a making clear of the roots of responsibility before the terrible choices history imposes on us - not as groups or nations, but as individuals.

All art after Kafka is a lie, says the father; yet lie, we are made to understand, goes on writing his Werfel-like books. Appelfeld, though, has taken his point. Not that Kafka was simply "prophetic", or that the Nazis have made language "unusable", but that the events of those years forced on the consciousness of ordinary people everywhere, but on Jews in particular, an understanding of what Kafka, like Kierkegaard before him, had put at the heart of his work: that we are never at one with ourselves, that we can never speak the truth, only show it, that we can only grow into what we are, that we refuse our destiny at the cost of our humanity. And the writer too is implicated. Appelfeld shows how people use words and their imaginations to deny reality and themselves; the truth, when it comes, is silent.

With this book, indeed, post-war writing has come of age, for it has grasped and made palpable for us the relation of the great modernist

tradition of Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Proust and Kafka to the crucial events of modern times, and it has done so not by being clever but by being wise, not by numbing us with images and ideas but by looking quietly and steadily at what is central to our lives. It is absurd to ask: Which part of the book is real, which imagined? Both are real because the juxtaposition of the two makes us capable of imagining both. And so, at the end, we go back and start the book again, aware that it will give us neither a story nor an answer, but instead something for more precious: a stirring of what was dead in us back to some kind of life, an experience both painful and joyous.

The Fürsts were honest people. A strange honesty. A sick honesty. In the civil days they stood up to be counted and joined the queue with all the other deportees. The way they stood by themselves in the locked temple stirred the hearts of the bidden people with wonder for the last time. There were four of them and all the way to Minsk they did not remove their caps. Not all the Fürsts possessed the same strength, however. August stayed in his shop. And he was still sitting in it. And all night long Bruno continued to see the converts standing at attention in the temple like repentant soldiers. And afterward too, in the cold and close to death, they did not utter a sound.

S. S. Prawer.

STEFAN ZWELG

Beware of Pity
Translated by Phillis and Trevor Blewitt
353pp. Cape. £7.95.
0 224 02057 9

Stefan Zweig, born almost exactly a hundred years ago, has of late attracted some doily-champ attention. A high-powered academic conference has been devoted solely to his work; celebrations and special lectures have been arranged all over the Western world; and in English-speaking countries his fiction is being reassigned to the plaudits of such cult-figures as John Fowles and Salman Rushdie. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that this revised version of a translation that first appeared in 1939 has now been published. Its title, *Beware of Pity*, also graced a splendidly cast but clumsily directed British film of 1946. It is well-chosen, for the dangers of the wrong kind of pity constitute a theme that is constantly sign-posted and emphasized throughout the book. It has been announced by an epigraph, distinguishing pity of "the weak and

sentimental kind" from "the only kind that counts, the unsentimental but creative kind, which knows what it is about and is determined to hold out, in patience and forbearance, to the very limit of its strength and even beyond." The anti-Nietzschean note, timely when the hard men had taken over Germany and Zweig's native Austria and were trying to extirpate pity or compassion by precept and example, rings out loud and clear. Zweig, it appears, had himself considered a German title embodying the word "Mitleid", but settled in the end on *Ungeduld des Herzens* - a type of title of which he was very fond.

The English translation may miss a nuance here and there ("ein klingender Abend" is something altogether softer, more musical, more Viennese, than "a clangorous evening"), but on the whole it has faithfully captured the tone and spirit of the original. The clichés come thick and fast: pulses "race", hearts "swell", hands are "clasped as if in prayer", love is "burning", blood "rushes" and "throbs", midlife is "dazzling", moonlight is "eerie", and it all leads up to the thumping platitudes of the final sentence: "no guilt is forgotten as long as the conscience still knows of it." All this is wholly in keeping with the

original, whose author could, in the late 1930s, go on using phrases such as "glühende Liebe", "brennender Kuss", "mit schlagenden Pulsen" and other such staples of the popular romance. To put these in the mouth of an Austrian army-officer and war-hero unbending himself to a relatively stranger seems particularly inappropriate.

In some cases the English translation is slightly less lush than the original. Nicht daran denken, indes das Briefblatt einmütig die Hand noch versengt mit seinen brennenden Worten, das Briefblatt, das eine und das andere, das man summt und wieder wegwagt und wieder liest und vergleicht, das erste und das zweite, bis jedes Wort eingedrungen ist wie ein Brandmal im Gehirn! Nie ein Brandmal im Gehirn! Nie ein Brandmal, indes man doch nur dies eine und eine zu denken vermag: wie eintrinnen, wie sich weben? Wie sich retten vor diesem geräuschigen Andrang von diesem unerwünschten Überschwang?

"Think no more about it - when those letters were still scorching your fingers with their burning words, the first letter and the second, 'until every word was branded into your brain. Think no more about it - when you could think of only one thing - how to escape, how to resist, how to save yourself from this greedy importunity, from this unwelcome and immoderate passion."

Page after wordy page of such "brennende Worte" make one realize why Muriel was so scornful of his compatriot Zweig and why the anti-novel had to be invented.

Everything in *Beware of Pity* is, talked about, and talked about again; one searches vainly for subtleties, indications, mature complexities. What might have made an acceptable novel, as long as, say, Balzac's *Sarrasine*, to which its initial plot-line bears a resemblance that is surely not accidental - "swells up" into a novel nearly as long as *Rebecca*, and it would be fair to say that Zweig here stands to Balzac, or to Schnitzler, in the same kind of relation as that in which the author of *Rebecca* stands to the author of *Jane Eyre*. The most tired plot-devices are used without any detectable irony. A vital conversation is implausibly overheard in a railway compartment; everyone is ready at the drop of a hat; to tell his complete life story, including all his carefully hidden sins, meannesses and villainies, to a comparatively stranger, the crippled rich

girl falls in love with a dashing but poor army officer, whose military code then comes into conflict with the dictates of his heart and who, at the climax, dashes into battle in sheer despair and becomes a hero decorated for his valor. Saddest of all is the outcome of Zweig's attempt to subvert Nazi and proto-Nazi clichés in his presentation of the baptized Jew on whom much of the interest of the novel centres. At first this character seems something straight out of Gustav Freytag's *Soll und Haben*, from which generations of Germans had learnt to see Jews as financial manipulators ensnaring upright but unwary non-Jews; after marrying a non-Jewish wife who dies after giving birth to the daughter he idolizes, he becomes a thing of dog-like abjectness whose financial genius seems scarcely credible. It is hard to believe that all this has come from the pen of the same Stefan Zweig whose *Buchhandel* remains such a memorably rounded and unconventional presentation of a Jew in the Austro-Hungarian world.

It gives me no pleasure to record, so negative a reaction to a novel written when its author, driven out by the Anschluss, was clearly under great strain. Its reference to the coming Second World War at the beginning, and its First World War scenes at the end, suggest that Zweig felt his world collapsing around him. When he makes his hero declare that he does not know where to turn, that life has become impossible in his inner as well as his outer world, he seems to be speaking for himself as much as for his hero, the Austrian officer whose compassion for a crippled girl and her father presents the main motive force of his plot. Indeed, the officer's narrowly averted suicide, and the actual suicides of two other important characters, foreshadow the path Zweig was himself to take three years after the publication of *Beware of Pity*. One also recalls the title of Zweig's still very interesting autobiography - *Die Welt von Gestern*, *The World of Yesterday*.

That Zweig had enough sensitivity and taste to be aware of the limitations of his own talent is shown by various passages in *Beware of Pity* itself: passages which deprecate *pathetisch* sentimentalism, sentimentality and lush descriptions. Theoretically he could deplore all this; but he could not, it seems, avoid them in practice. *Beware of Pity* has, however, one undoubted virtue: it is a not-to-be-demanding good read, ideal for a train-journey or a holiday.

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commentary

New faces of an ancient world

J. B. Donne

Treasures of Ancient Nigeria
Royal Academy

Following *The Gold of Eldorado* and *The Great Lappan Exhibition*, the Royal Academy has once again welcomed to its galleries some of the greatest masterpieces of non-European art, this time from the continent of Africa. *Treasures of Ancient Nigeria* (open until January 23) consists of 100 of Nigeria's finest works of art spanning a period of over 2,000 years, from the fifth century ac to the mid-nineteenth century. Since the majority of these pieces have never left Africa before and are unlikely to do so again in our lifetime, this is a unique opportunity to discover an area of African art little enough known at first hand to specialists, and bound to attract and astonish all who view it.

The visitor's immediate response is amazement at finding such humanism and naturalism in the commensurate heads and busts. Facial features are softened, the eyes stare out into space, the heavy lips are sensually curved, and we seem to be gazing on individuals in a state of reflection or repose. If, as has been suggested, some of the heads were attached to simulacra at second burials to replace the actual head of the deceased, this would account for the naturalism. But an elephant too is most realistically an elephant, with its trunk ringed with creases and its tusks sprouting from the flesh, even if its eyes are somewhat humanized. This is not the African art to which the general public is accustomed - with its wooden masks and figure carvings (often still vulgarly referred to as "fetters"), contorted and distorted in their proportions, conceived with menace and fraught with fear.

Here indeed we have the skeleton of Nigerian art, largely unearthed by archaeologists in fairly recent years. Gone are all the woodcarvings, long since rotted by the rains or destroyed by the insect world. What remain are the traditions of court art and shrine furniture composed of brass, bronze

and copper, ivory and stone, and terracotta.

The oldest objects are the Nok terracottas, dated between 500 ac and 200 ad, found in the central plateau, sometimes on the surface, sometimes as much as forty feet deep in the tin mines. A single style pervades the area and the time span, the lips, nostrils, orbits and ears pierced, giving an air of alertness which is surprising if these heads once formed part of funerary furniture. Even more surprising is the variety of form - spherical, conical, cylindrical - within the style, and again the individuality of the faces and the diversity of coiffures, none of which is ever repeated.

But the highlight of the exhibition is likely to be the collection of bronze castings from Igbo-Ukwu, a small village a few miles from the left bank of the Lower Niger. These have been dated by the radiocarbon technique to the ninth to tenth centuries ad. Some of the pieces were associated with a royal burial, others with a desecrated shrine. Their immediate appeal must be due to the overall, but seldom overladen, surface decoration of fine lines, spirals, quatrefoils and enhanced triangles, which were first added as wax threads to the mould that formed the basis of the *cire-perdue* casting. The forms themselves are often taken from the world of nature - vessels in the shape of calabash or snail-shell, regalia developed out of a coiled snake, a bird and its eggs - but a human head with a high dressed coiffure provides a delightful miniature pendant.

The finest of all the Igbo-Ukwu bronzes, and perhaps the finest piece in the exhibition, represents a clay pot bound to a metal stand by interlocking ropes. Immense skill is required to cast such a complex object, and details still baffle the experts who have had an opportunity of studying it scientifically. An investigation carried out some years ago at the British Museum revealed that at least four pieces had had to be cast separately by the *cire-perdue* method and then joined together with metallic run-in. The result is not only a supreme example of the bronze-caster's art, but also a work of great aesthetic beauty, perfectly balanced in its proportions. The pot bears an intricate, but restrained decoration of wavy lines on

the rim and guilloches at neck and belly which contrast with the openwork rosette of the base. All this forms a background to the pattern of reef knots on the encircling rope. However, a human element has been allowed to creep in. Despite the apparent technical perfection there is an error: one knot is tied to nothing and would be impossible in real rope.

Incomparable as it is, and partly for that very reason, the art of Igbo-Ukwu does not fit in with that of the rest of Nigeria. But at life from the twelfth to fifteenth century we enter the classic tradition of portrait heads, busts and figures of kings, queens and court officials who actually lived. Their look of concentration or introspection can often be seen today on African faces caught in a reflective mood. But alongside this naturalism we find the human form so abstracted that it resembles an elemental chessman or a pepper-pot as shown by a piece from Abinibi. The contrast is far greater in both directions than between Epstein's heads and his "Rock Drill".

Whether life was directly responsible for the introduction of bronze-casting into Benin or not, its influence can certainly be seen in the fifteenth-century terracottas of Owu. Benin art is well known in this country, particularly since the large exhibition held in the Museum of Modern Art when it was first opened in 1970. But the provincial art is less familiar, and a head in Udo style, quite possibly female, has a sweet charm that is lacking in the more formal art of Benin proper. Finally, the seated figure from Ife, the finest example of life art (if indeed it did originate in Ife) and the bronze figures of a warrior and a Bowman, are unique. Speculation has done little towards elucidating their true place of manufacture and significance. We can but admire them for their technical verve, detailed surface decoration, and general impressiveness.

One important point this exhibition makes, though it is nowhere overtly stated, is that Igbo-Ukwu in the tenth century, African bronze-casting was far in advance of anything being achieved in Europe. For this reason alone it is important to visit the Royal Academy.



A pair of bronze leopards of the Benin period, from the exhibition reviewed here.

Handel in the hammam

Timothy McFarland

G. F. HANDEL
Xerxes
Sadler's Wells

Discussion of the merits and defects of *opera seria* (in contrast to the wholesale rejection which was normal not so very long) has become more urgent and better-informed as performances of baroque operas have increased in number and improved in the quality of production and musical performance. In the context of Gluck and Mozart the genre itself is under attack and anachronistic, and their musical language has developed in a way that changes the nature of the dramatic problem and its possible solutions. But it has become increasingly difficult to argue from those last decades that *opera seria* was always sterile or unperformable when we have seen such manifestly successful performances of Handel operas - even if we assume that Monteverdi and Cavalli are excluded by the terms of the debate. As the new production of *Xerxes* by the Handel Opera Society makes clear, the audience is no longer being invited to inspect an exhausted historical curiosity.

But if anything has been learned since this is a useful enough in an *opera seria* comedy. Similar elsewhere in the production (including a full scene-changing in mid-act) we are mostly used with restraint and wit at all in the heroic and passionate episodes.

Nevertheless their overall effect is slightly disconcerting. In that for stretches we feel that we are moving in the world of Rossini or Donizetti. It goes without saying that Handel does not suffer from such comparisons musically; more interestingly, *Xerxes* does not suffer from them dramatically or psychologically either. A more suitable stylistic model for production might be *Cost fan Tu*, which also suffers if the producer imposes too much distracting business. Handel's libretto, however, remodelled from a text already set by Cavalli eighty years previously, left him free to do his Melastasioan straitjacket but provided nothing in the way of counterpoint support to compare with Da Ponte's elegantly demonstrated theatre.

The question of whether a number of Handel's operas should not be now taking their place in our permanent repertoire could scarcely be asked fifteen years ago. It is very largely due to the Handel Opera Society that it can be asked. There is also a danger that Handel's operas will also be considered to be a corollary of the new clarity that we have beyond this phase, the Society might feel able to turn to the neglected baroque masters, especially to Alessandro Scarlatti.

which is at times dangerously misleading and not merely capricious as petulant. James Bowman encompasses the demands of the role with great strength and beauty of tone, singing with memorable variety from its charming opening non-Largo to the magnificent formal aria of *scène* in Act 3. Beside him as Arsames Robert Martin Oliver does justice to the delicacy of the predominantly elegant role. The rival sisters of Lydia and Sandra Dugdale are subtle contrasted in vocal timbre and characterization and both are delightful.

The problems of production posed by any *opera seria* are diminished when the action moves as rapidly as it does here. Tom Hawkes and his dagger Peter Rice have chosen to make musical variety with an equal richness of visual detail and stage business. The opera is given an opulent Oriental setting, with bright costumes in the Tiepolo-oriental style and now restrained sepias and grey-scale decorations with a charming patchwork of the Hellenistic, Roman and Attalidic ensembles that they guard at the end of Act 1 in a desert steaming Turkish bath, with a good deal of pedicure and massage fitting the *da capo* stretches of their aria.

The production device for overcoming this is a useful enough in an *opera seria* comedy. Similar elsewhere in the production (including a full scene-changing in mid-act) we are mostly used with restraint and wit at all in the heroic and passionate episodes.

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Arms and the ideal society

Richard Brain

G. B. SHAW
Major Barbara
Lyttelton Theatre

Mr Bernard Shaw
We just sitting out for the war,
When he heard it was a dangerous trade
And demonstrably underpaid.

So wrote E. Clive Bentley in his *Biography for Beginners* (1905). Though his biographer perhaps, to be a good cleric, that sounds the same year. But in November the same year Shaw was presenting to the London public Andrew Undershaft, the millenarian arms manufacturer (whose antagonist and daughter is the heroine of *Major Barbara*), forcefully and impressively advocating not only capitalist creation of wealth but also the use of armed force to achieve desired ends. "Nothing is ever done in this world until men are prepared to kill one another if it is not done" was the slogan that his predecessor and master in the inherited arms business had inscribed in his factory. "The nation paper that really governs is the gun," Undershaft argues near the end of the play, anticipating by almost exactly thirty-three years Mao Tse-tung's "Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun" (only Mao's phrasing was more effective).

The end Undershaft claims he deduces above all is the abolition of poverty, "the worst of crimes". Violence and war are not logically contained in the pursuit of this aim, which can be achieved by individual enterprise or through statist capitalism - or even in a socialist economy - by the industrial development of gentler commodities: soap, tea, textiles, baked beans, chocolate. (In *Arms and the Man*, 1904, Shaw had countered the leader's argument that modern war depended on gunpowder by showing how much it depended on chocolate.)

The only reason why Andrew Undershaft - prop and pillar of the City in which his eponymous church (alias St. Andrew's Cornhill) stands - is a millionaire in armaments manufacture is Shaw's love of polarities. The root cause of the play is indeed the wickedness of poverty, and in the production the fulfilment of charitable organizations which attempt merely to alleviate it by providing shelter and food for the homeless and hungry. Notable among such charities has been the Salvation Army. It was its mission of providing food and physical succour in order that the poor might be able to attend church and then, as St. Paul's Price put it, "the peace that passeth all understanding" and its systematic eradication of the military metaphor of "fight the good fight" and "Onward, ye soldiers", that provided Shaw with the pole against which to set up his polemic, the attacking of the vast philanthropic and Lazarus, fortune by fortune, and then, as St. Paul's Price put it, "the peace that passeth all understanding" and its systematic eradication of the military metaphor of "fight the good fight" and "Onward, ye soldiers", that provided Shaw with the pole against which to set up his polemic, the attacking of the vast philanthropic and Lazarus, fortune by fortune, and then, as St. Paul's Price put it, "the peace that passeth all understanding" and its systematic eradication of the military metaphor of "fight the good fight" and "Onward, ye soldiers", that provided Shaw with the pole 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A progressive in the fly-room

Steven Rose

ELOF AXEL CARLSON

Genes, Rndlatlan, and Society: The Life and Work of H. J. Muller. 457pp. Cornell University Press. £21. 0 8014 1304 4

There is a poignant moment in Elof Axel Carlson's biography of his mentor, the geneticist H. J. Muller: a meeting in 1959 between himself, Muller, by then sixty-nine and many years a Nobel Laureate for his discovery of the mutagenic effect of X-rays, and the exuberant Francis Crick, not yet Nobelized for proving the double-helical structure of DNA. For nearly fifty years, the leitmotiv of Muller's work had been the material basis of the gene. Now, a new generation of molecular biologists had located it in the complementary nucleotide structure of DNA. Yet far from being hailed as a prophetic forerunner, Muller and his students, in their formal clothes and crew-cuts, were virtually ignored by the fashionably dressed, long-haired and loud-talking Crick and his fellow conquerors of nature.

For Muller, time was out of joint almost throughout his life. His researching days had begun in the famous "flyroom" — the laboratory of T. H. Morgan, who had recognized that fruit flies, with their small size, rapid breeding cycle and range of observable variations (eye colour, wing shape and so on) could provide a wealth of genetic information far beyond what could be hoped for from the study of the slow-growing plants which had dominated genetics since the rediscovery of Mendel's work in the early 1900s. But although Morgan and his students were able to identify the "factors" which carried genetic information as localized on the chromosomes in the cells, they were very suspicious of attempts to argue that these factors had a material reality in actual chemical structures.

By contrast, Muller, who began

working with the group as a student in 1911, was already convinced that the "hereditary units" (the term gene was still not used) were chemical substances, made by biochemical processes within the cell — and he said as much in a remarkable student lecture to a biology club he had helped to found in 1909. Hence the locus of his research with the flies. If one could study the process of mutation — the appearance of new forms in the progeny of the flies — one could perhaps infer the nature of the substance, the gene, at which the mutation acted. If mutations were chemical, noxious chemicals or temperature change should increase the mutation rate.

But for ten years nothing Muller tried seemed to affect the rate. It wasn't until the later 1930s that effective chemical mutagens were discovered, by Charlotte Auerbach, working with Muller in Edinburgh. But long before then, in 1923, Muller had begun to develop the techniques which would give him the mutations he sought — X-rays. Radiation speeded up the mutation rate manifold, and in its use Muller believed he had the route to his philosophical goal: the artificial transmutation of organisms — the speeding-up of the evolutionary process. Just as physicists could use radiation to split the atom and transmute elements, so Muller believed he could do the same for organisms. To Morgan's disapproval he argued that before long geneticists would have to become chemists, extracting genes from organisms and manipulating them in the test-tube.

But Muller was not merely concerned with the abstract analysis of the genetic process; he urgently wanted to intervene in it. Again, the main theme of his life's belief was set in his undergraduate address to his biology club. Controlled human breeding, sterilization of the unfit, encouragement of the fit to breed more, would improve the human race. Sociologists would define the best human qualities; geneticists would breed for them. This enthusiasm led

Muller, along with many other geneticists, into the eugenics movement of the 1920s, with its belief that poverty and debauchery ran in the genes, and that white Anglo-Saxons were genetically superior to all other human "races". The political successes of the eugenics movement in the US in the 1920s — the passage in many states of sterilization Acts, and its invocation in the racialist immigration laws — conflicted with Muller's socialism: he rejected eugenics in the hands of the right, only to assert it in the hands of the left.

For Muller — improbably in the context of the generally highly conservative milieu of American science — was a socialist by conviction and political practice. Admittedly, his socialism was of a kind that today's radical left would criticize as elitist and chauvinist, committed to the view that science was inevitably socially progressive. The most famous scientist on campus at Austin, Texas, following his X-ray work, Muller helped students publish a radical magazine, was denounced as a communist and subversive, and in 1932 left the US for virtually a decade of wandering across Europe, in search of a congenial political and scientific base. Attracted by Soviet socialism's enthusiasm for science and the fame of its geneticists, such as Nikolai Vavilov, although with what appears to have been at best only a partial grasp of the Marxist concept of dialectical materialism (he read Engels, but philosophically remained a true child of the nineteenth-century mechanistic materialists such as Feuerbach and Moleschott, against whom Engels had polemicized), he found himself heading a genetics laboratory in Moscow. He arrived as a hero — only to be caught up in the turmoil which was to lead to the rise of the fraudulent Lysenko, the purging and ultimate death of Vavilov and the eclipse of Soviet genetics. Simultaneously, the rise of Nazism gave new and sinister meaning to the racial purification programme of eugenics.

Muller arranged a graceful exit from

the Soviet Union by way of the International Brigade in Spain and found refuge among the progressive geneticists of Edinburgh, where a political tradition of English socialism and anti-Nazism was also antithetical to the straitjacket which Stalin was beginning to fit over Soviet science. Finally, Muller returned to the US; by 1946 he was a Nobel laureate, though still without a permanent position in the scientific establishment, until he found a haven in Indiana which would last virtually to his death in 1967. Throughout the vicissitudes of his European pilgrimage, he kept his fly stocks going, returning to work with them when he could with the tenacity of a now dying breed of nineteenth-century scientist. But increasingly the new genetics he had heralded was to pass him by: the day of the fly was giving way to the day of the bug, the hand-lens to the ultracentrifuge, as genetics became inevitably biochemical.

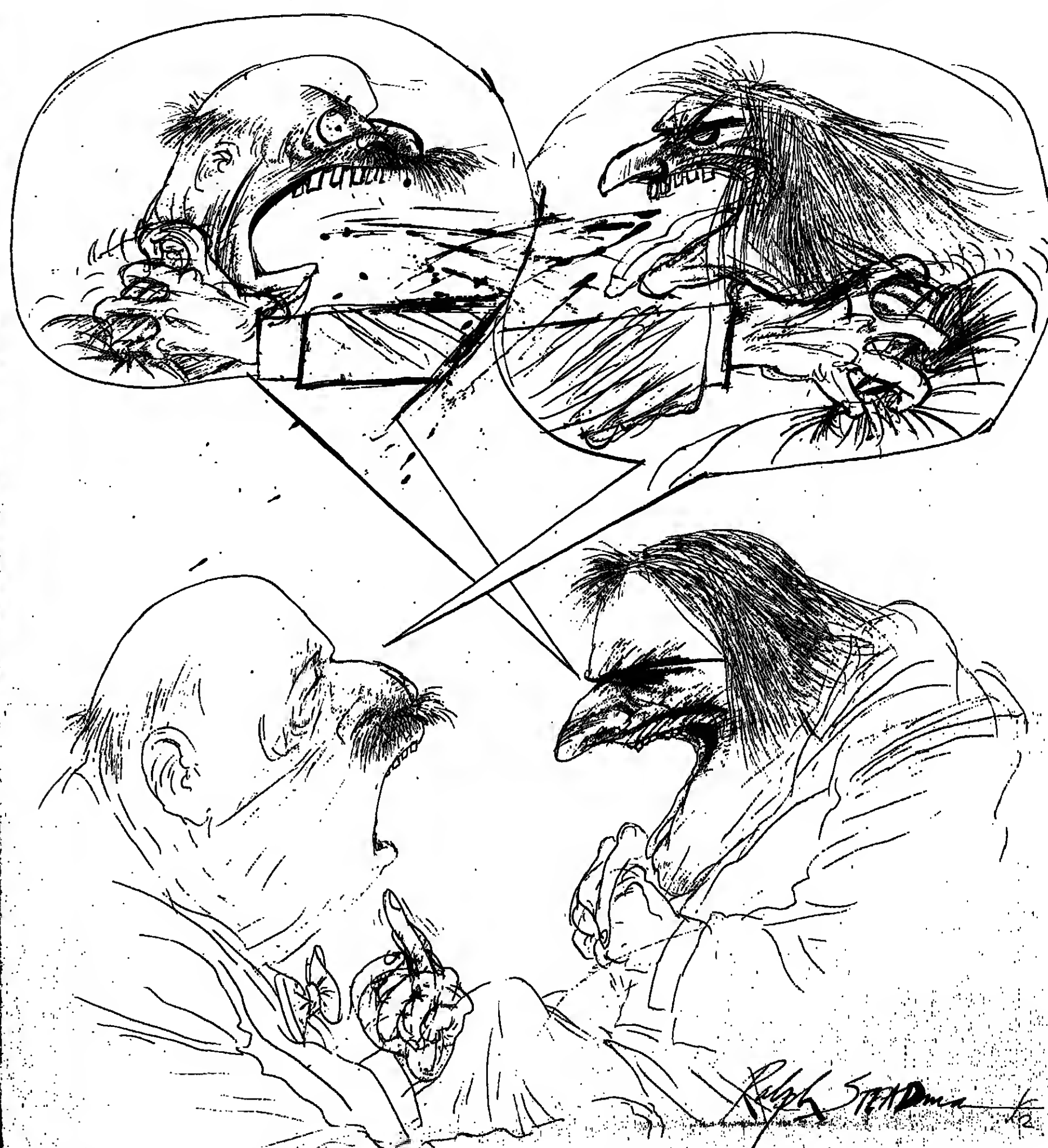
More and more Muller was concerned with public affairs; he reasserted his faith in eugenics ("in the right hands") and it is no surprise that the "genetic repository" in California set up to receive the frozen sperm of American Nobel prizewinners in the late 1970s should have been (until his widow protested) named after Herman Muller. The problems such naive preformationist reductionism was to lead him into (quite apart from the sexist image such sperm-banks reveal of the woman as merely an empty receptacle destined to breed male qualities) are indicated by the differences between the pre-war and post-war editions of his visionary book *Out of the Night*. In the 1930s, his list of famous men to be used as breeding stock included V. I. Lenin; in the post-war edition, Lenin's name was quietly dropped. But Muller clearly still believed, at one level, that the chances of Bolshevik revolution in the US were likely to be significantly enhanced by the seeding of recipients with Lenin-sperm. It is just that he liked the prospect less.

In addition, his work with X-rays

had proved that most mutations were deleterious rather than beneficial. A rote, the human "genetic book" increase. He became a trenchant critic not merely of the excessive manufacture of X-rays, but of the far more serious prospect of radiation damage from nuclear weapons, running foul of the US Atomic Energy Commission's result.

Muller seems to have been a somewhat suspicious man, with a capacity for unhappiness and a recurrent sense of the injustice of a world which denied him a recognition and priority to his scientific achievements deserved. Yet he clearly also inspired love in his students, and Dr Carlson's biography is a series of stages each set by an introduction of new organisms to study or of new technologies by which to study them. Carlson himself, a geneticist and a historian of his subject, he understands Muller's social contribution intimately, but cannot help feeling that some of his genteel old-fashionedness which he on meeting Crick in 1959 had remained with him. He respects Muller's concerns with X-ray damage; he cannot find it in him to embrace even understand the enthusiasm of Muller — like so many others — for Soviet communism in the 1930s, as yet to draw out strongly enough the implications, social and intellectual, of the eugenic obsessions which both pre- and post-dated Muller's socialism.

But the enigmatic figure of Muller demanded a full-length biography: the history of genetics was to be adequately served, and despite the limitations Dr Carlson has done his job splendidly.



From biology to politics

Jane Lewis

NANCY STEPAN

The Idea of Race in Science: Great Britain 1800-1960. 230pp. Macmillan. In association with St Antony's College, Oxford. £20. 0 333 28856 4

In 1899 an American sociologist estimated that over one and a half million adults and ten million children had been measured in Europe and the United States in order to establish their racial identity. The notion of millions of skulls being measured by callipers and cephalometers in the name of scientific investigation may well be dismissed as absurd, but the tendency to so dismiss it may also be responsible for the neglect by historians of British racial science. Nancy Stepan has done us a great service by treating the subject comprehensively and seriously.

Few of the biologists and physical anthropologists whose work was crucial to the development of a racial science broke the accepted canons of scientific procedure of their day. As Stepan argues, racial science may have been bad science, but it cannot be dismissed as pseudo-science, not even at its apparently lunatic fringe. That lots of people in early nineteenth-century England rubbed off to have their "heads read" should not obscure the fact that phrenology influenced the views of a generation of scientists in Britain, including many leading evolutionists. Similarly, the eugenics movement of the early twentieth century, which has often received short shrift from historians, was supported by some of the finest scientists of the day.

It is interesting that many aspects of racial science, particularly its vocabulary, should have become so

popular. Politicians and the press talked about the fear of "racial degeneration" during the 1900s and continued to refer to the dangers of breeding a "C3 population" well into the interwar period. These terms were never properly defined. Indeed Stepan shows that the term "race" itself was given a wide variety of meanings. It was used to refer to cultural, religious, national, linguistic, ethnic and geographic groups of human beings, so that at one time or another the "Jews", "Celts", "Irish", "Negro", "Anglo-Saxon", "Europeans", "Mediterraneans" and "Aryans" were all "races" according to scientists. The major problem faced by the physical anthropologists was how to divide up individuals and populations into distinct racial categories which were acceptable to everyone. It proved impossible to accomplish this on the basis of skull measurement, which was why blood groups were seized on so eagerly by some anthropologists in the hope that they would provide a better classificatory system. But essentially each scientist found as many races as he wanted.

While it is easy to understand scientific fascination with human variation, it is hard to see why, in view of the obvious methodological difficulties, scientists made race central to their analysis of human diversity. Between 1800 and 1950, to use Stepan's phrase, "race" was everything. For the physical anthropologist, racial classification implicitly provided an explanation of human society and history, and for the biologist, the evolution of culture could be explained in biological rather than historical terms. In other words, racial science provided "naturalistic" explanations for extremely puzzling and complex human problems. An important part of the appeal of evolution and the much earlier notion of a great chain of being was the way in which both incorporated the idea of a natural hierarchy. Early in the debate

the crucial issue became how wide the gulf between man and the animals actually was; those who considered it to be small, like Darwin himself, tended "naturally" to insert the "lower", "savage" races, and in particular the Negro, to fill it. Stepan is able to point continuously to the way in which social and moral issues were treated simply in biological terms. Eugenists, for example, investigated families solely in order to establish patterns of heredity, assuming that the appearance of a trait in generation after generation proved it to be hereditary, while ignoring the fact that the family itself is also an agent of social transmission.

Stepan argues that racial science must be understood in terms of an underlying continuity rather than of changing stages. Even though evolutionists rejected the idea of an original, created diversity of racial types associated with one strand of early nineteenth-century scientific thought, most scientists interpreted evolution in such a way as to make natural selection no longer operative on physical man, so that racial types could still be thought of as old and fixed. It was not that scientists consciously promoted racialism. The vast majority did not, although many nonetheless played a part in strengthening racial science. The early nineteenth-century biologist, James Cowles Prichard, is a case in point, for despite his opposition to slavery, Prichard instinctively shared the contemporary belief in European superiority. During the early nineteenth century, as Stepan argues, "race" increasingly became a primary form of self and group identification. Convinced that racial difference was qualitative, Western European scientists measured groups of men negatively against an ideal image of themselves.

This must help to explain the great emotional commitment with which

scientists held on to biological explanations of human problems. Since the revelation that the late Sir Cyril Burt falsified some of his data, there has perhaps been a greater readiness to accept the strength of the influence exerted by ideological assumptions. For, as Stepan notes, the point is that scientists are always susceptible to ideas and traditions in their own societies which may consciously or unconsciously shape the way in which they define problems and the theories they put forward to explain them. Thus while Karl Pearson's statistical approach to eugenics meant that he insisted that the anthropologist should deal not with the racial type nor with the individual but with the statistically representative sample of race, he nevertheless had no doubt that there was correlation between physical and mental traits. It was just that the anthropologists were

looking for it in the wrong places and the wrong way. Not until after World War Two did the work of population geneticists, which ousted the old classificatory biology of race.

If there is a criticism to make of the admirably lucid synthesis of the developments in racial science over two centuries, and of the historical debates surrounding particular issues and figures, it is that it may not be possible to restrict discussion to a scientific debate and still write a social history of ideas that it Stepan stated goal. Charles Webster recently suggested that we should look at evolutionary theory as a link between the biological and social sciences. Certainly, the interplay between political and scientific discourse in this area is important enough to warrant further investigation.

George Everard Rumphius (1628-1702) was a well-educated German naturalist from Hanau. After three obscure years of service as a mercenary soldier in Europe, he went out to the East in 1652 as a military cadet in the service of the Dutch East India Company (VOC). Shortly after his arrival at Batavia in June 1653 he was posted to Ambon, where he transferred to the civil branch and where he remained until his death. His outstanding merits as a naturalist were recognized by the highest authorities at Batavia (he not always by those at Ambon). He was soon released from active duty, but given an adequate salary to devote himself to his studies on the regional flora, fish, shellfish, minerals and precious stones. He became blind in 1670 and lost his wife and daughter in a disastrous earthquake four years later. But with job-like constancy, he continued his researches, helped by his son, being variously known as the

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The flow of favours

P. A. Brunt

RICHARD P. SALLER

Personal Patronage under the Early Empire
222pp. Cambridge University Press.
£18.50.
0 521 23300 3

Patronage and clientship are taken in this lucid, elegant, scholarly and well-reasoned study to be an asymmetrical relationship between unequals for the exchange of goods and services extending over some length of time. In Roman terms it involves the performance of *officia*, which may describe strict moral obligations, or *beneficia*, which may mean mere favours. Roman moralists indeed thought it proper to bestow *beneficia* without thought of recompense, and only on those who deserved them, but the deserving would be those who would repay materially when they could, and in any event with lasting gratitude. Friends too have reciprocal obligations, and the distinction between friendship and patronage is hard to draw, since patrons would courteously style as friends those who were so far below them in social status as to really their dependants. Richard P. Saller tends to classify as patronage the support given by senior friends to their juniors of the same or much the same status who were destined to be their successors in eminence. This is patronage in a very attenuated sense, which inevitably exists in all societies, as today in politics and many professions, and did not necessarily involve dependence.

In the Roman Republic the nobility, it is commonly supposed, owed their political dominance largely to the mass of clients whom they could marshal as voters in the assemblies or even as fighters in street brawls or civil wars. Under the Principate power was concentrated in the autocrat, and flowed downwards from those he chose to honour. A subject who tried to establish his own power on a personal following could incur the fatal

suspicion of an all-powerful emperor. This gives some colour to the conception that the importance of patronage declined in the Principate. Saller refutes this: he might have gone further. The prevailing interpretation of Republican politics rests more on endless repetition than on ancient evidence. As voters, gangsters and soldiers humble Italians had often set at naught the wishes and interests of the nobility in response to the slogan of freedom (personal security and independence) and to the hope of material gains, cheap food distributed at public expense, grants of land by the state, remissions of debt. In the Principate they had lost their political rights and could not resort to insurrection. Benefits, in so far as they were assured by imperial administration of the law, could be obtained only by access to the emperor and those who had his ear or possessed authority by his favour. Patronage then becomes more indispensable, and evidence for it actually multiplies, notably but not only in the city of Rome itself. It remains true that the patrons did not gain in power through their dependants. What did they get out of it? Sometimes gifts, but chiefly honour, dignity, prestige, to which the highest value was attached in antiquity. In the Republic too that had probably been true; we hear most of client communities and individuals in the provinces, who also abundantly documented in the Principate, but they could never contribute much to political and military power. "A man's social status was reflected in the size of his following."

Saller is rather too ready to accept modern conceptions of the patronal role of the emperor himself. Naturally he had his own personal or family clients, having often been once a private magnate. But the suggestion that he was the universal patron has no support in the evidence. Moreover, a patron was one from whom special favours were expected; the patron of all would be the patron of none. Of course the emperor bestowed innumerable *beneficia*, ranging from offices and status to huge gifts of money. But by advancing some, he

inevitably disappointed others; and liberality (at the taxpayers' expense), if carried too far, entailed unpopular exactions. Saller quotes a saying of Seneca that, protected by his *beneficium*, an emperor was secure in the love of his subjects. But *beneficium* does not always imply reciprocity between friends or patrons and clients: Romans spoke of the *beneficium* of a law, which secured rights to all qualified persons. It was a general beneficence that would enable the emperor to rule securely with general consent. Saller says that he was "expected" to bestow offices etc on his friends. But it was the mark of a good emperor to have friends chosen for nobility, talent and integrity; his position was weakened if he had unworthy "favourites". Desert was theoretically the criterion for benefits bestowed on others. Thus citizenship was granted to those who had really or supposedly rendered services to Rome, and immunities on men who had reached admitted distinction in certain professions. In actual fact of course favours often flowed from imperial caprice, or were procured for their friends and clients by men of influence.

The great merit of Saller's book lies in his account of the working of influence, not least in official appointments. Unlike the Chinese, the Romans evolved no "impersonal mechanism" for filling posts in the civil administration or army. Saller shows that the claims of seniority in promotion are commonly overstated. Those of merit are harder to assess. The emperor rarely knew candidates at first hand and had to rely on the recommendations of others. This was also true of high officials making appointments themselves. "Referees" praised their protégés only in very general terms for "integrity" (a virtue more often lauded than practised in a venal society), culture and industry. Often that was what was desired in an official (as Saller rightly maintains) "general experience", and "good character" rather than "technical competence", which is seldom illustrated in long public careers, this is not surprising. In similar circumstances

modern referees often write in similar terms, and now, as then, the weight of their testimonials varies with the respect they themselves enjoy with whoever makes the appointment. What is alien to moderns is the candour with which Romans stress that if their candidate is selected they or other notables will be placed under an obligation to be repaid if possible, though in addressing the emperor they can only parade their own devotion and the favour he has already shown them. Stranger still, men had little or no compunction in using their influence to expedite and even deflect the course of justice in the interest of friends or clients.

The network of patronage extended, as Saller illustrates in his last chapter,

Three tens of tyrants

P. J. Rhodes

PETER KRENTZ

The Thirty at Athens
167pp. Cornell University Press.
0 8014 1430 4

We are well supplied with source texts on the régime of the Thirty in Athens, in 404-403 ac: in Xenophon's *Hellenica* we have the narrative of a man who lived under that régime; there are accounts in the histories of Diodorus Siculus and Justin, both (it is agreed) derived from the fourth-century writer Ephorus; there is another fourth-century version in the Aristotelian *Athenian Politics*; and we have further material in law-court speeches, particularly that of Lysias against Erastosthenes. These narratives disagree, not only on the matters to be included, and on the truth about some of those matters, but also on the order in which some of the main episodes took place.

Most scholars have concluded that, where disagreement exists, the eyewitness Xenophon is to be preferred. If this is right, the change from democracy to "the ancestral constitution" was not required by Sparta in the peace treaty which ended the Peloponnesian War; soon after coming to power, the Thirty obtained the support of a Spartan garrison and embarked on a reign of terror; in response to the objections of Thucydides, who had helped to bring the oligarchy into being but was unhappy with the result, they produced a list of three thousand privileged citizens and disarmed the remainder; they then eliminated Thucydides and expelled the unprivileged from the city; and after that Thrasylus occupied Phyle and built up a force of democratic supporters to oppose the Thirty.

Peter Krentz suggests that Ephorus' account of the Thirty was derived partly from Xenophon and partly from that anonymous combination of Thucydides, the *Hellenica*, *Oxyrhynchus*, and that the account in the *Athenian Politics* was derived from H.O.; H.O., where they can be compared, is superior to Xenophon; so the version of events in A.P. if derived from H.O., deserves serious consideration. Accordingly, Krentz believes that "the ancestral

constitution" was required by Sparta; the oligarchy was mild and well-intentioned at first; trouble began when Thrasylus occupied Phyle and Thucydides was eliminated because he wanted to broaden the basis of the government in order to meet the threat; after that the unprivileged were disarmed, and the Thirty became more ruthless and finally asked for a garrison from Sparta.

In addition to the charge of perspective which results from a change in preferred source, Krentz's further revisions to advance his strikingly, the oligarchic régime was not simply a narrow oligarchy but an attempt to remodel the Athenian state on Spartan lines: thirty was the size of the Spartan gerousia; ten thousand was about the number of the Spartan "equals" in 404 (this is perhaps too generous an estimate if we judge from their number in 371); when the unprivileged Athenians were expelled from the city and Krentz believes, forced to turn to agriculture, the difference between the ten thousand and the others would resemble that between Spartan "equals" and perioeci.

No ancient text defends the Thirty and it may be that they do not defend all the obloquy that has been heaped on them. However, Krentz's book is built on sand. That Ephorus said in *Athenian Politics* that a source common to him and Xenophon was A.P. is derived from the *Hellenica* *Oxyrhynchus* is a pure speculation. Ephorus agreed with Xenophon on the order of the main events, and A.P. divergent order seems designed to place the killing of Thucydides and to exculpate him from involvement in the misdeeds of the Thirty. Imbalance of Sparta can be seen in the "other" who acted as political sponges before the democracy was overthrown; but the Thirty are best explained (as in A.P. account) as three tens, and for A.P. less than for Xenophon (for part of the story it appears to be these three tens who have a common source) the privileged three thousand as part of the original oligarchic plan in response to Thucydides' objection. In building up his picture Krentz proposes new restorations and dates for a pair of fragments of inscriptions; and whether we like it or not, it has now a secure place in the philosophy of modern political thought to answer - John Rawls's *A Theory of Justice*.

The main argument of *ASU* explains the history but not the acclamation. Nozick maintains that individuals are capable of acquiring natural rights of ownership over resources by their own efforts or by trading with those who have already acquired such rights. These natural property rights are so extensive that they leave no room for the state of anything like rights to the material care, education, a job, a decent standard of living, or even equality of opportunity. The resources would require it is already someone's property, so (according to Nozick) no state rights exist. He does not even have to maintain that property rights are absolute since he recognizes that the moral universe that could possibly compete with them. The role of the government, Nozick claims, is to recognize, protect and uphold

Birth of a bureaucracy

Kyril FitzLyon

DAVID ROUSSET

The Legacy of the Bolshevik Revolution: Volume 1 of a Critical History of the USSR
Translated by Alan Freeman
310pp. Allison and Busby. £13.95 (paperback, £5.95).
0 85031 160 8

The dust-jacket of *The Legacy of the Bolshevik Revolution* quotes the opinions expressed by highly reputable French newspapers and periodicals when the whole work, including previously the eventual Volume Two of the English translation, appeared in France a decade ago under the title *La Société Soviétique*. It is a chorus of praise, with the *Quinzaine Littéraire* affirming that "the most important book of the year", fully comparable to *Das Kapital*. The British publishers acclaim it as "the first critical history of the USSR of any breadth or scholarship to have appeared".

It is disappointing, therefore, to find that by far the greater part of the present volume consists of little more than an uncritical repetition of official mythology and a collection of clichés borrowed, with or without acknowledgement, from the writings of Trotsky, Bukharin, Rakovsky and the so-called "left opposition".

Generally, Rousset's basic theme, like that of his teachers, is the revolution's failure, for which he perceives two fundamental reasons: its prematureness and its bureaucratization. It was, in his view, premature in Russia and would have been anywhere else at the time, not for political or social or even economic reasons, but because the technological level reached by industry anywhere was still too low: capitalist conditions of production had not yet

reached the peak of their efficiency and, hence, were not yet ready to be superseded by socialism. Consequently, after a short interlude of proletarian democracy and workers' control of industry, the bureaucracy started taking over, until eventually, by 1929-30, it became the ruling class. The proletariat no longer controlled the means of production, the Soviet Union ceased to be a workers' state and "the capitalist mode of production was reintroduced".

Rousset never asks himself the question whether the workers' state, in the shape of a genuine workers' control of industry, really existed in Lenin's time, the time of "war communism" much admired by Rousset for its socialist purity. Officially it did, and he accepts this as a fact, just as he accepts that Lenin's true aim was "a broad workers' democracy", and that "all power to the soviets" was not a slogan, meant (like workers' control) to disorganize and weaken opponents, but a serious goal to be achieved and consolidated as a permanent institution. Rousset even asserts that "war communism" took on the task of agricultural collectivization, though in actual fact the relevant decree passed in February 1919 was never seriously applied. By 1927, long after "war communism" had passed into history, the collective and state farms did not even cover two per cent of the sown area.

Together with Trotsky and the "left opposition", Rousset sees the 1920s as dominated by the *kulaks* or "rich" peasants, though, wisely, he does not attempt to define exactly who they were (neither did Lenin, it should be added), how rich they had to be to fit into that category or, indeed, whether wealth had anything to do with it (very little or nothing at all, in the opinion of those who preferred a political or a social definition). Whoever they were, in Rousset's (and Trotsky's) estimation

they were an emanation of the New Economic Policy (NEP), and, being protected by the bureaucracy, they became a social force, pressing for the denationalization of the land, concentrating in their hands "most of the harvests and revenues", infiltrating "the apparatus of control" and reducing the poorer peasants to the status of "agricultural workers or unemployed labourers". It is interesting to compare this view of the Russian "rich" peasants' power and influence in the 1920s with the revealing fact that in 1925 peasant households wealthy enough to employ hired labour formed just 1.9 per cent of the total number. Nevertheless, Rousset remains convinced of the *kulaks*' power and thinks, or at least repeats with the Trotskyists of the time, that with the rich peasant dominating the agricultural scene, the urban worker "dispossessed of his theoretical and practical rights of control", and the free market restored through NEP, the socialism introduced by the revolution was at an end.

Stalin buried it. True, he put an end to NEP and all its works, stepped up industrialization, prevented any denationalization of the land by a vigorous policy of collectivization and exterminated the *kulaks* - all useful measures in Rousset's estimation, but which deprived the "left opposition" of "any political programme". Stalin, after all, "was continuing the work of the revolution". The trouble was that he was doing so "with barbarous methods": state terror and the physical liquidation of the opposition. These methods undermined all the revolutionary gains of the Stalinist régime since they "provoked a social growth of the bureaucracy" which "supplanted the proletariat" as the ruling class.

On this view, Khrushchev's de-Stalinization merely scratched the surface, since the bureaucracy was not

affected. By naming as victims of Stalin's terror only the members of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and other establishment figures, Khrushchev exempted "the upper bureaucracy" from responsibility for the crimes committed. Post-Stalin governments, like all governments found themselves, for good or ill, in the power of current scientific and technological development. If they did not abolish labour camps altogether, they at least shut down a number of them, but this was because "administrative compulsion - as a regulator of production - was rejected by the new technical infrastructure": camps became "a major obstacle" to development. However, science, which made possible the new technology and hence the growth of productive forces, required complete intellectual freedom for its development, and the scientific intelligentsia, which began by criticizing the management of the economy, ended with a demand for political democratization. The government's ("bureaucracy's") response has been

repression and a move towards the re-establishment of Stalinism. This, Rousset thinks, it is unlikely to achieve since it would involve large-scale re-introduction of concentration camps, which would go "against the social and technological demands" of a modern economy. Only an extremely critical internal situation and "a violent reversal of the world conjuncture" - an unclear condition - could force the Soviet bureaucracy to disregard these demands.

None of this adds much to the criticism and analysis of the Soviet régime as voiced by the communist left. This is not, perhaps, surprising since Rousset is himself a founding member of the Trotskyist movement, but it limits the book's interest or usefulness. However, to be fair, it may be too early to pass judgment on a work on the basis of its first volume only. Besides, its style, turgid and ponderous as it is, is aggravated by a very inadequate translation which, on occasion, deprives the contents of much of their meaning. Perhaps Volume Two will be more fortunate.

Liberty before all

Geoffrey Sampson

DAVID SPITZ

The Real World of Liberalism
232pp. University of Chicago Press.
£14.
0 226 76973 9

Few political terms ever mean the same thing to all of their users. It is just too tempting to stretch the attractive words to cover one's own position, and to stretch the nasty words to include one's opponents. (Does "fascist" nowadays mean anything more than "holding political views with which the speaker strongly disagrees"? Even so, the word "liberal" has had unusually bad luck. It isn't merely that some people use it as little more than a vague expression of approval: in America it has actually come to stand for something like the opposite of its etymological sense. A few years ago the Professor of Jurisprudence at Oxford (an American) defined a liberal as someone who values equality over freedom when the two ideals conflict. "Liberal" in the US, in fact, commonly functions as a euphemism for "socialist", still an unmentionable word in much of American society. In Britain the connotation of individual freedom from state control has never been lost, but the word has become so confusing that it seems to be little used nowadays.

David Spitz believes in liberalism, sees it as losing ground in contemporary American society to less attractive political ideals, and aims to launch a "counterattack" against liberalism's enemies. But what liberalism is Spitz defending? The first commendation in his "Credo for liberalism" runs, uncompromisingly, "Esteem liberty above all other values, even over equality and justice." This seems hardly an extreme liberal ideal, if not an archaic social ideal. But elsewhere Spitz puts a very different gloss on his liberalism: "contemporary liberals turn to a positive version of the state and countenance wide rule-making activity... the positive state... employs an egalitarian form of power - one man, one vote - to counteract those radical disparities, especially economic disparities, that interfere with genuine individual freedom of choice." This use of state power to equalize people's economic situations is a political aim which can legitimately be advocated, but to suggest that this aim flows from the decision to esteem liberty over equality can lead to nothing but confusion.

A curious feature of the Nozick debate is that the man himself has never seen fit to respond in print to critics of *ASU*. (This is in marked contrast to Rawls, who, since 1971, has made several contributions to the debate about *A Theory of Justice*.) Perhaps Nozick can be criticized for this: philosophy thrives on debate and exchange, and much of the progress that is made in the subject nowadays is made in continuing dialogue in the public forum. In any case, his silence has constrained the editor to include a paper that Nozick wrote three years before *ASU* was published. The paper reconstructs and criticizes Ayn Rand's argument for capitalism based on the necessity of egoism. It is no doubt a fascinating piece, but its interest lies mainly in the context of the domestic squabbles of the American libertarian right. Its inclusion here (and that of two or three other papers which pursue the issue) threatens to distort and undermine the general appeal of an otherwise excellent collection.

More interesting than these rather dated chapters are the parts of the book in which Spitz discusses the emergence, since the mid-1970s, of various thinkers of the New Right. They horrify him; they are carnivores, and Spitz is a herbivore. Unfortunately he is very selective in his coverage. He has a fair amount on Friedrich Hayek (an honorary member of the New Right even if he was born in the nineteenth century), and a lot on Robert Nozick, but he nowhere refers to Milton Friedman's son, David (whose advocacy of a stateless or near-stateless capitalist society is a good deal more consistent and persuasive than Nozick's), and he mentions Murray Rothbard just once, dismissing him briefly as a "so-called libertarian" - though it would be difficult to go further than Rothbard in adhering to Spitz's principle of esteeming liberty above equality and justice.

Spitz notices how the emergence of lively pro-capitalist social thought has been accompanied by a sudden eagerness on the part of American money-men to fund scholarships of this congenial variety. This is happening on quite a large scale now. It raises an obvious problem, and as far as I am aware Spitz is the first to have drawn public attention to it. Nevertheless I believe he exaggerates the danger that corporate patronage will give "conservative" thinkers an influence that they could not have attained without it. A lot of right-wing academics are currently being maintained by much funding, but in my experience most of them are pretty dull writers; managers of American corporations tend not to be skilled at judging either scholarship or literary talent; the long run ideas pursued by fall on their merits, rather than by reference to the weight of dollars backing them.

David Spitz died shortly before the manuscript of this book was ready for publication. A few passages were written up by his wife, and the book is an unfinished state. Spitz would probably have eliminated various repetitions and inconsistencies between the reprinted earlier articles, and improved the new material.

Building on the ruins

Russell Meiggs

GUSTAV HERMANSEN

Ostia: Aspects of Roman City Life
261pp. University of Alberta Press.
0 88694 060 8

Before the Second World War Ostia attracted few visitors and meagre literature. The excavations had already provided the first practical illustration of the housing revolution at Rome in the late Republic and early Empire, but little attention was paid to them outside Italy. The intensive campaign of 1938-42 transformed the place of Ostia in Roman studies. The excavated area was more than doubled, leaving only a third of the town still covered, and the large number of new inscriptions included many of prime importance. New light was thrown on the development of the town plan, which is now seen, as the author of this book explains in detail, to have expanded first to the west and not the east of the Castrum. New variations in the plans of *insulae* were discovered, and more buildings associated with the guilds. We now know much more of Ostia's trade, religion and public life, and the new evidence has stimulated much new writing. Most visits to Rome now include a day in the ruins of Ostia, enhanced by imaginative landscaping.

Gustav Hermansen is a devotee. He has studied the buildings in great detail over many years and he has already contributed useful articles on individual topics; in this book he caters for professionals and amateurs. Those who are familiar with the site will be most interested in the chapters dealing with establishments owned by the guilds, the analysis of the apartment in the big housing-blocks, and the application of Roman building regulations to Ostia. It is true, the new

excavations inscriptions had revealed the names of many trade guilds and had thrown light on some of their activities, but there was very little evidence for the premises they occupied. Much more evidence is now available. Professor Hermansen has examined the common features and identified many buildings that were anonymous. Most impressive in this field is his examination of the *Castragale di Tarentino* which he shows to be part of a large complex which includes a temple on the Decumanus dedicated to the deified emperor Perseus by the builders (*fabri tignarii*). It might be added that the dedication is particularly apt since Perseus is said to have got his cognomen from his pertinacity in the timber-trade. The attribution of the richly appointed *Scuola dei Tarentino* to the *navicularii* rather than the *fabri navales* is also convincing.

His study of the standard apartment plan is based on his identification of the *medianum* of the *Digast* with the long room, with windows to draw light from street, garden or inner court, front which rooms open on three sides, two of them large and better appointed than the rest. He regards this middle room as the most important in the apartment, where the cooking and eating were done, and where most of the day was spent. But while such a common room would be valuable in an apartment for *humilliores*, most of the apartments of this type which survive are handsomely decorated, and would be occupied by local compellions or successful traders, who would not use a kitchen for a living room.

The evidence for Roman building standards is drawn mainly from the *Digast* and Tacitus' description of the new building regulations which Nero laid down for the rebuilding of Rome after the great fire of AD 64. As we should expect the new regulations seem to have applied also to Ostia, but

ona would have welcomed an explanation of what was intended by the replacement of timber by the less inflammable tufa in certain parts of buildings.

Those who are unfamiliar with Ostia might be advised to turn first to the more general chapters. A brief survey of all the bars, taverns and hostels in Ostia serves as a peg to put together all that is known from other sources of this type of building, their reputation, and the government's attitude to them. Similarly the fire risk is studied from the Ostian evidence, supplemented by what is known of Roman practice, enlivened by a description of fires in thirteenth century Constantinople quoted from a contemporary handbook for travellers; but one misses a description of the ship, the fireman's most important equipment.

This book is admirably produced. It is well illustrated with plans and photographs and the notes are helpful. It is also a good size for following the more difficult plans on the ground.

The Hag's Daughter

Behind the church a limestone well
Leaps persistently on an old doll
Left long ago to be turned to stone
By her mother's so-called sorcery.

An old woman now, the hag back-packed
Her hump between the houses
For eighty years. She never shared
Her mother's indifference to these people.

Still they turn away in the street
Kindly enough, but reluctant to stand
Long in her gaze - as if afraid that
The sediment in her eyes may petrify.

Marion Lomax

As the first in an occasional series of Monographs of the Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies published by Aphrodisias and the Centre at Aphrodisias, the book is by Reynolds (214pp plus 32pp of black and white illustrations. Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies, Gordon Square, London WC1H 0DA. £26.00 90 7764 00 2). The volume consists of two articles, inscribed documents, bearing on the official relationship between the city of Aphrodisias and the city of Rome in the third century AD, together with additional texts relevant to the interpretation.

The main argument of *ASU* explains the history but not the acclamation. Nozick maintains that individuals are capable of acquiring natural rights of ownership over resources by their own efforts or by trading with those who have already acquired such rights. These natural property rights are so extensive that they leave no room for the state of anything like rights to the material care, education, a job, a decent standard of living, or even equality of opportunity. The resources would require it is already someone's property, so (according to Nozick) no state rights exist. He does not even have to maintain that property rights are absolute since he recognizes that the moral universe that could possibly compete with them. The role of the government, Nozick claims, is to recognize, protect and uphold

For this reason, Jeffrey Paul's collection of essays on *ASU* is a deserved tribute to Nozick's work. It is obviously modelled on Norman Daniels' collection, *Reading Rawls*, to guide students through an extensive

Setting log upon log

Sergei Hackel

DAVID BUXTON

The Wooden Churches of Eastern Europe: An Introductory Survey
405pp. Cambridge University Press.
£42.50.
0 521 23786 6

In 1934, when there were few such things about, a young English traveller published a book on Russian medieval churches. The book has figured in the appropriate bibliographies ever since, but it seemed curious that none other was forthcoming from its author's pen to supplement it over the ensuing years. In fact, the author was busy elsewhere and with other things. The book which he now publishes five decades later was well worth waiting for. Only an incidental phrase in its concluding pages (a reference to an axolotl) reveals that an entomologist's career intervened between these two Cambridge publications.

David Buxton's new book takes him back to the Soviet Union, and in preparation for it (1972-75) he reverted to his earlier role as traveller. But his canvas is broader, while his focus is more precise. Almost the whole of Eastern Europe is included in his study; and it is almost exclusively the wooden architecture – more precisely, the wooden church architecture – of the region which is his concern. At the same time, although he is dealing largely with the legacy of medieval times, the surviving monuments limit him largely to that great age of wooden architecture which begins in the seventeenth century and rises to its apogee in the eighteenth.

He gives his work the unassuming subtitle, "an introductory survey". False modesty? One might ask, when its four hundred or so pages are meticulously researched and provided with more than five hundred apt (in most cases original) illustrations. It is an introduction, it is certainly not a perfunctory one. Yet introduction it necessarily remains, since it would be difficult to cite another work which covers quite this ground. Particular studies of Ukrainian, Carpatho-

Russian, North Russian, Finnish, Polish or Romanian wooden church architecture may be found, though not usually in English; whereas such a comparative study of these complex areas places each in a new perspective and casts fresh light on the cultural history of the whole.

At the same time, it is a survey in the best sense of the term. Unlike the turbulent Strzygowski, to whose indirect influence he pays generous if carefully qualified tribute, David Buxton is not seeking to establish any alternative theory about the nature of European architecture, still less of the European mind. On the contrary, his approach is sober, tentative, pragmatic; and while he presents the relevant evidence with due care, he prefers to withhold judgment rather than press his findings in the service of any one established view.

Of particular importance is Buxton's categorization of the structures he describes. In this respect he is not helped by the shifting and often arbitrary political boundaries of Central and Eastern Europe. Ethnic boundaries are much more to the point, and Buxton impressively reveals the integrity and importance of the local traditions developed by such peoples as the adventurous Lemks (divided between Poland, Slovakia and this western reaches of the Soviet Union) or the more conservative Boyks (formerly in Poland, now in the Ukraine). To turn, the character of such local traditions is determined less by whether they are Eastern European (indeed the book reveals that there can be no question of an essential "Eastern European" style), but rather by reference to the rite of the relevant builders and patrons. Thus the book divides naturally and justifiably into studies of Orthodox/Uniate, Catholic and Protestant styles. In Buxton's words: "The all-important factor is religious affiliation, which may or may not coincide with citizenship (though it usually coincides with language)."

This is not to say that liturgical factors are of primary interest to an author. On the contrary, references to such things are disappointingly rare. It is significant that it is only in the discussion of Protestant buildings that the question of acoustics is mentioned, and even then only in passing. Rather it is the morphology of style in each milieu which fascinates Buxton above all. Hence the space devoted to building techniques and their evolution, especially the techniques required for structures using solid, horizontal logs (in Strzygowski's terminology, *blockbau*, in Buxton's, *blockwork*). In convincing terms he traces the development of rectangular into octagonal buildings, of octagonal towers into domes.

The simplest buildings can be of interest (and some Ruthenian churches are described as "endearing intimate"). But the book also provides a timely reminder that the study of these buildings is not as peripheral to the history of architecture as it has too often been allowed to remain. Indeed, among them one can find "some of the most impressive and beautiful structures in all Europe". Names like Krivka and Novomoskovsk will now need to be added to the more familiar Kizhi in any serious account of Eastern Europe's architectural achievement.

Necessarily, Buxton thus broaches the vexed question of the relationship between wood and masonry buildings.



The late eighteenth-century church at Rdwula, near Ustrzyki Dolne, Poland, reproduced from the book reviewed here.

This in turn involves the relationship between locally developed and international styles, whether Byzantine or Baroque. Buxton's conclusions in either case are never doctrinaire. Whereas, with careful qualifications, he will allow for the influence of wood on masonry structures in Northern Russia, he will equally note the reverse in respect of Poland. And whereas it would only be natural to expect a dominant Byzantine influence in the Ukrainian plains after centuries of adherence to the Eastern rite, he detects comparatively little of it. However tentative the conclusions he draws from such findings, they could provide correctives in a number of related fields. Thus the influence of Ukrainian Baroque on the so-called Moscow Baroque at the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries has been well established over the years; but fresh consideration could now be given to the contribution made by the wooden structures of the Eastern Ukraine to the development of each in turn.

David Buxton manifestly enjoyed his search for the surviving buildings in countries and countryside which (as often as not) are difficult of access.

Indeed, the more isolated the monument, the greater his delight in locating it. It is also clear that the largely anonymous craftsmen whose work he describes. But it is in the appreciation of a survey to poetry, aesthetic criteria for the appreciation of these buildings are less than granted, and the author's own contentions himself with only the briefest of evaluations. We read of a "delightful 'pleasing to the eye'" occasionally "learn of an 'artistic disaster'". "Commodious, firmness and delay" were the qualities Sir Henry Wotton sought in fine architecture: all in a "delight" and even "commodious" given less consideration than the question of structural "firmness".

Firm though they are, the magnificent structures cannot remain vulnerable. Throughout the ages they have been subject to destruction by fire. The twentieth century, with its wars, its anti-religious campaigns and (in regard to the now extinct and much regretted wooden synagogues) its antisemitism, has artificially and often consciously reduced their number to a small degree; many of the buildings which Buxton photographed in the 1920s are no longer to be found. More recently, however, it has also been the case that the proliferation of open-air museums, albeit at the cost of depriving buildings of their true and their natural habitat, has grubbed both the conservationist's and the traveller's task. David Buxton clearly in two minds about conservation. There is no doubt that he has found much to admire in the museums of Lvov, Kiev or Sevastopol. At the same time he feels impelled to end his excellent and admirably produced work with a pointed comment on his monument "commodity".

In some at least of the countries surveyed village churches are so plentiful that part of the problem is to find the people for whom they were created and evolved. Museum sites are useful, but I hope the day will come when every surviving wooden church is a museum piece and nothing more.

In love as in war

T. P. Matheson

A. R. HUMPHREYS (Editor)

Much Ado About Nothing
237pp. Methuen. £11.50 (paperback).
£2.40.
0 416 17990 8

In all the proliferation of new Shakespeare editions, many survive only to confirm that the goals of the Shakespearean editor have not radically altered since Theobald formulated them in 1733 as "the Emendation of corrupt Passages; the Expansion of obscure and difficult ones; and an Inquiry into the Beauties and Defects of Composition". In these terms *Much Ado About Nothing* presents a relatively straightforward task. There is general scholarly agreement on the important matters of text and sources; and the play's continuing theatrical popularity might imply a similar coherence and consistency of critical response.

A. R. Humphreys's revision for the new Arden Edition of Grace R. Trevelyan's 1924 Arden *Much Ado* does not represent the kind of fundamental evaluation of the play in the light of new knowledge and new opinion that has been required of some recent editors. Most of the factual considerations affecting the play were already sufficiently clear in 1924, and the present editor sometimes needs to do no more than reconsider, re-order, and rephrase long-established conclusions. The continuous debt to the work of his predecessor, particularly in the illustrative material of the commentary, is obvious. Many notes are taken over almost verbatim, and properly acknowledged by Professor Humphreys in his preface. Other original notes are drastically abbreviated to reduce the amount of secondary illustration; ninety-five of commentary on *cheque-page* in 11.1.68 are reduced to nineteen. Easyistic discursiveness is curbed to

improve clarity and relevance, but with inevitable allusive impoverishment. Documentation (from post-1924 reference books such as Tilly's *Dictionary of Proverbs*) replaces quotation.

It is surprising in a greatly enlarged introduction to find how little opinion has shifted on the origin and transmission of the text of the play. The present text is based, in common with all its competitors, on the quarto of 1600, printed by Valentine Simmes after two entries in the Stationers' Register (one to "etay", and one to print) in August of the same year. Seventeen copies survive, without significant textual variation, and the printing has been carefully investigated

by Craig Ferguson and Charlton Hinman, who conclude that it was set by one compositor, casting off his copy – Shakespeare's own manuscript. The presence of actors' names in some quarto speech-prefixes ("Kemp" for Dogberry and "Coley" for Verges in IV.2) encouraged the New Cambridge and old Arden editors to identify the copy for the quarto as a theatrical prompt-book, and other inconsistencies (such as the entry of a "phantom" Innogen, Leonato's wife, who neither speaks nor is spoken to) suggested to Dover Wilson that Shakespeare was perhaps revising an old play.

But those very inconsistencies now seem to make it more likely that we are dealing with Shakespeare's own "foul papers", a partly unrevised draft containing a number of unrealized authorial intentions and some typical authorial imprecision in stage-directions (as at V.3 "and three or four with tapers"). After some unmethodical tidying-up by the book-keeper this copy was possibly retained for use in the theatre – although this aspect of the copy's history is inevitably more obscure than its fate in the printing-shop. Common features and common errors in the next printed version, the Folio of 1623, seem a clear indication of derivative status, despite differences affecting stage-directions, act divisions, the omission of five short passages, and many minor textual variations, presumably the result of someone marking up a copy of the 1600 quarto.

Humphreys, without abandoning the general procedure of modernization, commits this edition strongly to the quarto, particularly to its putative, in contrast to the folio, of relatively light punctuation: "However much or little Q's punctuation is actually Shakespeare's it often serves his dramatic purposes expressively, and when it does it is worth preserving. It does not offend modern usage, is retained in the present edition as reflecting the excited flurry of notions". Without the reassurance that somewhere close behind the copy-text lies Shakespeare's own manuscript, could any editor rely so firmly on such apparently impressionistic and eclectic pragmatism? In practice, textual problems are few and minor, the only serious crux occurring at V.1.16 where the earliest editions give Leonato the unintelligible line "And sorrow, woe, crye hom, when he should grone". Humphreys, to a rare disagreement with Trevelyan, here follows Capell rather than Stevens to read "Did sorrow woe, cry 'Hein! when he should groan", occasioning almost the only long purely textual note in the volume.

Data and literary genetics (at least for the main plot) are equally transparent. The omission of the play from Francis Meres's list (1598) offers as earlier limit and Kemp's departure from the Lord Chamberlain's Men in 1599 in later. The work of Prouty, Muir and Brilloglio has made the identification and analysis of sources comparatively authoritative and precise. Of the many and onerous analogues for the story of a lover tricked into believing his mistress false, Humphreys finds Bandello's twenty-second tale from *La Prima Parte de le Novelle* (1554) closest to Shakespeare, interwoven with materials from Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*. From Bandello Shakespeare seems to derive: the setting in Messina; the name of Pedro and Leonato; the fact of Claudio's military service; courtship through a "noble intermediary; the deceiver's disguised agent; the lover's public rejection of his supposedly false bride; the religious assurances which buoy up the hero's friends; the sequence of sworn, reviled, self-defence, presumed death, obsequies and epitaph; Claudio's withdrawal and withdrawal; Claudio's offer of a substitute bride through his brother; the acceptance and marriage to a veiled, unknown lady; the revelation, followed by princely festivities.

Yet there are significant differences, quite apart from Shakespeare's counterpointed secondary actions involving Beatrice and Benedick and Claudio's withdrawal and withdrawal. A long section of the introduction, using recent research, is devoted to the interpretation of the play on the stage, particularly in this century; essential for a play whose stage effects (seeing, overhearing and interpreting) exploit the nature of theatre itself, which requires us to see, overhear and interpret the simulations of those who try to make us believe that all is true.

Dogberry. Shakespeare transforms Don Pedro into a powerful presiding presence, making the others more courtly, neutralizing the social difference between Claudio and Hero. Leonato's wife is discarded as the element of jocular rivalry for Hero's love removed, the intrigue being explained by Don John's sense of brotherly oppression, his bastardy and alienation from human warmth. Claudio's cruel public rejection of Hero is partly rationalized by his inexperience and the greater proofs he is offered in support of the deception, and its effect made less shocking by our continuous awareness that the means for correcting his mistake (the Watch) is at hand.

Characteristically, in a comedy, Shakespeare ignores the historical and political inspiration he might have derived from the date and setting of Bandello's tale, emphasizing exclusively social and human aspects. Bandello sets the story in the bloody period of the Sicilian Vespers (1282), after the Aragonese, led by King Pedro, seized Sicily, defeated Charles II of Naples, and transferred the court from Palermo to Messina. Thus, Shakespeare's multinational force (Don Pedro from Aragon, Benedick from Padua, Claudio from Florence), revelling after slaughter, might well have experienced the tension between an alien ruling aristocracy and its native subjects and collaborators. But Shakespeare rejects any political dimension and the only human echo of it in the play is in the final exclusion of Don Pedro the Spaniard from the intermarriage of the Italians. Until disrupted by intrigue, the World of Messina (as Humphreys terms it) is a familiar society of familiar friends, and no recent production seems to have differentiated Spaniard from Italian with that initially comfortable social world.

Humphreys is sceptical of and unsympathetic to what he calls "the sociologically earnest mood of some modern critics" who find the scale of Claudio's and Don Pedro's callous indifference to Hero's suffering in the creation of a frivolous society inhibited by frivolous people, a society of spies and peepers, in which Don John's malignity is merely an extension of the shallow values of a masculine officer-class. A correct reading, in his view, must balance the elements of gay and grave in the play, must give the proper weight to Claudio and Hero (despite their apparently pallid characterization), and must prevent the robust exuberance of Beatrice and Benedick from dominating the "tragic potential within prevalent comedy is of the play's essence."

However, despite a resolute attempt to redress the balance in his introduction, which devotes proportionately less attention to the two invented actions than to the archetypal Hero-Claudio plot, Humphreys is so responsive to the brilliance of form and expression throughout the play that he underestimates the serious concerns which the very brilliance of style and construction reveals, and has no time for what have been called the "astounding complexities of the sex war" (A long section of the introduction, using recent research, is devoted to the interpretation of the play on the stage, particularly in this century; essential for a play whose stage effects (seeing, overhearing and interpreting) exploit the nature of theatre itself, which requires us to see, overhear and interpret the simulations of those who try to make us believe that all is true).

With benefit of clergy

Robin Cormack

HENRY MAGUIRE

Art and Eloquence in Byzantium
146pp, plus 111 black-and-white illustrations. Corgford: Princeton University Press. £22.80.
0 691 0372 0

The old view that Byzantine art was an unchanging "style" produced for over a thousand years is no longer acceptable. (If not dead), it has been replaced by the recognition of subtle but significant shifts of expression within a conservative culture. It is one thing for the art historian to recognize change over the period (whether these are seen as progressions, regressions, zigzags, etc.), and another to go beyond description to explanation. The attraction of *Art and Eloquence in Byzantium* is that it attempts historical explanations for changes in Byzantine art from the fifth to the fifteenth century, and in doing so, brings into the discussion (texts of the period which even Byzantinists have tended to ignore).

The claim argued for in the book is, as Henry Maguire says, a simple one: "that the sermons and hymns of the Byzantine church influenced the way in which Byzantine artists illustrated narrative texts". He also pursues another argument, at a different level: that a training in grammar and rhetoric played an important part in the education of the Byzantine clergy. Because the textbooks of rhetoric used in this education were either composed in Late Antiquity, or were essentially updated versions of ones which had been (and thus incorporated the methods of pagan orators), Maguire is inclined to emphasize the continuity of

Byzantine cultural expression from Antiquity and to argue that changes in art were initiated according to principles of composition in line with classical rhetoric. The way he formulates this underlying theme can be well exemplified by his analysis of Byzantine portrayals of the Lamentation over the Dead Christ, a scene which, he says, best illustrates "the humanistic [sic] tendencies of Byzantine art after Iconoclasm". Maguire sees the progressively more emotional treatment of the scene (which accelerated in the course of the twelfth century) as showing "how humanism in Byzantine art was nourished by the hidden currents of literary classicism, which flowed from the schoolroom into the hymns and sermons of the Byzantine church, and ultimately into its art".

This is a scholarly and knowledgeable study which should be applauded for making important juxtapositions between visual images and literature, particularly sermons. Maguire argues, for example, that a number of artists showed the elderly Symeon rushing physically towards the Christ-child in their portrayals of the Presentation at the Temple, because their basic was not the words of St Luke's Gospel but the embroidered versions of the event produced by preachers. He also proposes that the visual references to Springtime in certain pictures of the Annunciation were inspired by literary set-pieces, which stimulated artists to seek out and adapt such themes from other pictorial sources in order to "emphasize the season of the event, and the metaphor of fertility. Such examples are without doubt sufficient to support Maguire's case that, despite the apparent difficulties of correlating convoluted theological texts with the productions of unknown artists, the question of

these relationships deserves to be explored. But, it must be said, not all the suggestions made here are equally convincing, even if one were to accept the framework within which they are argued. Two particular cases may help to illustrate the kind of problems which are raised.

The popular group of saints, the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste, play a prominent role in the argument. Maguire claims that after the end of Iconoclasm in 843, artists representing their dying moments radically changed the previous conventions for depicting the martyrdom, and that the change occurred through the influence of fourth-century Patristic sermons; in the early period, he argues, the martyrs, freed to death on the ice of a lake, were shown in impressive poses of prayer, whereas in the tenth century the actual physical horrors of such a death were portrayed. Maguire derives this "new" portrayal from a famous sermon of St Basil. The difficulty is that his characterization of the earlier supposedly standard iconography rests on only two surviving versions, both in the church of St Maria Antiqua in Rome and both "provincial" works of the seventh century. Their evidence is too tenuous to support the characterization of a "norm" and so the whole case for a tenth-century innovation is inconclusive (Maguire's qualification that, even if the tortures were shown in lost pre-iconoclastic works, some explanation for the rejection of the St Maria Antiqua tradition would be necessary, reads as special pleading).

The second case leads to difficulties of a different kind, and concerns the principle by which scenes were arranged across the architecture of churches. Maguire argues that in the twelfth-century church of St George at

Kuhinovo (in Yugoslavia), the Christ child held in the arms of the Virgin in the apse somehow mirrors the pose of the child of the Virgin herself as held by Christ in the scene of the Kolossal which was painted on the west wall of this basilica. This visual interpretation is not easy to accept, but it is used in support of a claim that the rhetorical figure of antithesis lay behind the planning of such decorative schemes. The further problem here is that Maguire makes no attempt to modify this theory in the face of the probability of just such binary oppositions being enmeshed within any religious system of rhetoric and discourse, or on any level and text.

There can be no doubt that this book will help in the appreciation of certain iconographical nuances in the works of art discussed, but it also poses the question whether its terms of reference are acceptable as a basis for further studies. Maguire writes of his "small sampling... many other scenes and subjects common to Byzantine art and literature await exploration", and his selection is a fairly random one. An insight into his way of thinking may be got from his reference to the influence of rhetoric on art as being a relationship between "two media". Maguire takes the correlation between a literary text and a work of art to be indicative of a temporal influence of the rhetorical implications of this are bound to worry us. The book tells us very little about the nature of the texts he has selected (sermons and hymns), though few readers will know their peculiar conventions; there is little specific information about the sermons selected for regular recitation in the Orthodox Church (this information, still needs to be extracted from the great corpus of Ehrard). Yet we are

bond to suppose that the complexities of expression to be found in Byzantine sermons were far less accessible to artists and to the public than were the words of familiar hymns; but Maguire does not explore this distinction. Despite the care he takes to match text with image, the feeling may linger that anything one wants can be found in a sermon and that the "sources" in the Bible or the Apocrypha, or in commentaries on these, or in other religious texts. One may also regret that Maguire has not drawn more on the growing scholarly literature of rhetoric and discourse, or on any level and text.

If one takes sermons, hymns and works of art to be interconnected strands of the mesh making up a religious culture, then one is bound to be concerned to see correlations between them as pointers to structures of thought and symbolism rather than mutual influences. In this respect the work of Michael Baxandall goes some way to the ways in which the medieval Renaissance sermons can help to decode the historical structure of pictorial thinking. Of course it is possible to argue that some ideas were literally by the words of a theologian and were possibly conveyed to the artist by way of sermon or homily. It is difficult, however, to see what criteria for recognizing this procedure, Henry Maguire's observations about individual dramatic scenes and plays, but is much less useful in his overview of the period. The better known plays and dramatists are handled more confidently than the lesser ones, but although this is the case, the author to develop a more systematic approach to the material is not always covered in the most helpful fashion.

Between postscript and prelude

Trevor R. Griffiths

Luis POTTER (General Editor)

The Revels History of Drama in English
Volume IV 1613-1660.
37pp. Methuen. £25.
0 416 13050 X

Since its inception, the value of *The Revels History of Drama in English* has been limited by the idiosyncratic chronological divisions chosen for individual volumes. The years 1613 to 1660 could benefit considerably from treatment in their own right, rather than as a postscript to Shakespeare or as a prelude to the Restoration. Despite the various theatrical activities of the Commonwealth period, the rebirth of a legitimate professional theatre in 1660 remains a genuine watershed in theatrical history. However, Shakespeare's retirement and the closing down of the Globe in 1613 mark a less convincing divide and the careers of Jonson, Middleton, Dekker, Heywood, Webster and Chapman all cut across this chronological division, thus limiting the scope for discussion of their writing in Volume IV. The difficulty here is exacerbated by the fact that *The White Devil*, *The Duchess of Malfi* and *Bartholomew Fair* all fall within the volume's chronological preserve, but are discussed in Volume III, thus leaving three major works from the period to be treated in Volume IV.

The most assured part of the volume is, not surprisingly, by Professor G. E. Bentley who distils his unrivalled knowledge of "The theatres and the actors" into fifty-three masterly concise and lucid pages, performing a clearly defined task with precision, economy and skill. Professor Edwards's complementary discussion of "Society and the theatre" is more anecdotal but, although the anecdotes are often interesting in their own right, they do not constitute an overall view.

There is no large-scale consideration of acting, theatre buildings and the nature of the scenery used in theatrical performances, and this is a major omission. The Preface declares that "there is no section on the architecture of the playhouses", to avoid overlapping with Volume III. It would indeed be unnecessary to match

the main consideration of Middleton in a section on secular drama; Platonic masques, Platonic love and Platonic plays are discussed as separate topics; the masque and the relationship between public and private performances form a constant thread, but the issues are dealt with piecemeal. Despite the constraints Kathleen McLuskie produces some good individual discussions, in particular of the relationship between printed text and stage action, as exemplified in stage directions.

The period after 1642, when organized professional theatre was suppressed, offers another major challenge since there is inevitably rather less material to discuss. Although Luis Potter examines the significant and interesting dramatic literature of the Commonwealth, including the Castle Ashby manuscripts, she makes no extravagant claims for the output of this period. Indeed one would have welcomed more enthusiasm in both the sections on dramatic literature: despite the Preface's rejection of traditional views of the period as one of decline, both sections are marked by a degree of concessive defensiveness about the quality of the work discussed.

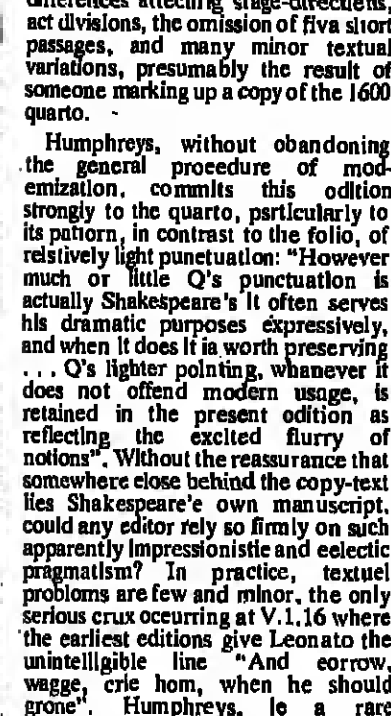
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Richard Hoadley's joist-by-joist analysis of theatres from the aerial view, but this policy also means that there are no substantial discussions of Inigo Jones's contributions to the development of the English theatre, and that John Webb is mentioned only once.

The illustrations, which might have illuminated the examination of masques and staging considerably, are rather disappointing. Some are familiar but important enough to justify reproduction, but several of the portraits are rather uninformative. Three of the plates of masque costumes have been badly captioned so that their significance and relationship to the text is only revealed by a careful scanning of the contents pages. The cover picture of John Lowin is captioned to indicate that he was the original Volpone, Sir Epleure Mammon, Melantius, Henry VIII and Bosola, but only one of the plays in which these characters appear falls within the scope of this volume. These points, relatively trivial in themselves, are symptomatic of a general lack of coherence in the series and of a raggedness in the organization of this volume.

Despite the efforts of the individual contributors and the quality of their contributions, the initial decision to split the consideration of pre-Restoration drama at 1613, coupled with the problems posed by contributors withdrawing, has resulted in a flawed work. This is a pity in view of the sound desire to consider seriously a period which has tended to be the poor relation in works covering both Elizabethan and Stuart theatre. But it is also true that the contributions between the theatre and drama of the period before and after 1613 are ultimately too great to permit a fully informative, independent discussion within the format of this volume. *The Revels History of Drama in English*, Volume IV, offered an opportunity to consolidate and make accessible recent critical insight and scholarly discovery and to advance the period's considerable claims to interest. Unfortunately the opportunity has been at best only half grasped.



"Two Female Dancers" (1589) by B. Buonaiuti, an illustration taken from *Costume on the Stage 1600-1940* by Diana de Marly (167pp. Batsford. £12.50. 0 7134 3770 7).

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Communicating the conscious

E. L. Epstein

ANN BANFIELD

Unspeakeable Sentences: Narration and representation in the language of fiction

340pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul, £15.95, 0 7100 0905 4

Chomsky has asserted a number of times recently that language may not be essentially, or even primarily, a medium of communication but is rather a medium of expression that can be used for communication. This provocative thesis receives confirmation from Ann Banfield's important new book, in which she conducts a microscopic study of the language of literature as composed of linguistic expressions. Those who consider "communication" to be a magic word may be moved by this book to consider exactly what the term means.

Banfield starts by combating the theory of Tzvetan Todorov and others that literature is essentially a mode of communication, between a Speaker (the author, combined with a narrator) and an (assumed) Hearer/Addresser (the audience). This "dual-voice" theory is attacked and left dead in the dust; as she writes at the end of the strictly analytical part of the book:

[the dual-voice communication theory] pronounces itself on the basis of unsupported linguistic assumptions and then retreats into the imprecise language of literary criticism when a counter-theory undercuts these assumptions. For this reason it proceeds no farther than a traditional criticism. A rigorous linguistic argumentation, on the other hand, takes us to the limits of present knowledge and confronts us with the well-formulated problems which remain, now, short of pseudo-explanations and a comfortably familiar but deceptive way of talking. The author has definitively disappeared from the text and is locatable henceforth only outside it. We turn to the objectified text, which must be held together by some other hypothesis than that of the narrator's voice.

In all this, linguistic argumentation has also revealed features of literary language which remain otherwise closed to us or penetrable only by intermittent flashes of insight.

Banfield then begins with direct and indirect discourse, and with the linguistic generalizations derived therefrom proceeds to analyse other sorts of sentences most of them from English, Irish, American and French authors (she takes examples from more than sixty-five writers in all). The sentences of direct and indirect discourse are "speakeable"; indeed, they either report speech, or are actually spoken. In them the communicative function is very strong. Consider the following sentences,

which are derived (slightly altered) from a famous "communication", the first over the newly invented telephone (my example):

Time: March 10, 1876 2:10 pm
Place: a room in the rented top floor of a Boston rooming house
ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL (spills some acid by accident on his clothes, and exclaims into a small device on the table before him):
Mr Watson! Come here! I want you!

Time: same date 2:10 and five seconds
Place: another room in the same Boston rooming house
MR WATSON (speaks excitedly into a small device on the table before him):
Yes, sir! I hear you! I am coming!

According to the extension of Chomskian theory that Banfield employs, we have here two expressions (symbolized by E). Each of the E's contains three subsidiary E's. In this case exclamations and sentences. The presence of "you" in both expressions, a clear sign of "communication" as defined by the author, ensures that these really are communications. In each, each Speaker is expressing his self to a Hearer/Addresser; according to who is speaking the reference of "I" and "you" shifts; in each utterance the time is the Present-Now, and the place is the Here, which also shifts from Speaker to Speaker, from room to room. All is seen from the subjective point of view, which regards itself as the occupant of a subjective universe with its own person, place and time.

Consider, however, what happens if Bell is reminding us to a reporter twenty-four years after the event:

Time: March 10, 1900 10:00 am
Place: a room in a house in New York City
ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL (to reporter):
"Called out: 'Mr. Watson! Come here! I want you!'" and he called out that he had heard me and that he was coming.

Many changes have taken place. Only the bare propositional content of Watson's expression remains: "he had heard me" and "he was coming". All the signs of Speaker have disappeared from Watson's statement - the "I's" have become "he's"; the tense has changed from Watson's Present-Now into Bell's Past-Then. Watson has even lost his exclamations, the signs of his subjective reaction to events: "Yes, sir!" is gone, as well as his other exclamations.

In her text, Banfield describes more than half a dozen signs of objectivity that cannot express itself with the advent of indirect discourse. One of the most interesting is the so-called "evaluative adjectives". If some person X says, "Sam is going to marry that lovely girl, Susan", the speech could be reported by Y as "X says that Sam is going to marry that appalling girl, Susan". Y has reached into X's statement and given his own opinion.

Banfield observes at it is point that one speaker cannot express the subjectivity of another. Only by allowing that other speaker to use his own words (in direct discourse) can someone else's Self speak for itself. When this is not retained, the status of Speaker, and of Speaker's Now, is lost.

From this principle Banfield turns to examine specifically literary forms of language like that of the Free Indirect Style, which she calls Represented Speech and Thought. Imagine that our reporter, having taken careful notes on his conversation with Bell, then wrote a story in literary form containing the following expressions:

Mr Bell then called over his telephone apparatus to Mr Watson.
Mr Watson! Come here! He wanted him! cried Mr Bell. And yes sir! he heard him! He was coming! cried Mr Watson.

Here what seem to be some of the signs of the Self have crept back - the exclamations and exclamations - marks are restored - while others are still missing - the "I's" have not returned, nor have the "you's", and the tenses stay obstinately in the Past. There are two subjectivities, two Selves, that do not speak for themselves.

Banfield describes the status of Free Indirect Style in terms of the presence or absence of Speaker, and the presence or absence of Present tenses.

Mr Watson! Come here! He wanted him! cried Mr Bell. And yes sir! he heard him! He was coming! cried Mr Watson.

"Mr Watson! Come here! He wanted him! cried Mr Bell" is one large E-node, or expressive whole. This contains a "subject of consciousness", a Self. However, the Self lacks a Speaker, because the "E-node" lacks "I's" and contains third-person references. (Note that "Mr Watson! Come here!" would be read as containing a Speaker because of the first-person "I's".) Yes sir! he heard him! was coming! cried Mr Watson" is another "E-node" with a Self but no Speaker. These are "unspeakeable sentences". In addition, the Now which all these single E's contain lacks a Present, so all the moments of speech are past, as these sentences suggest.

Having described the strictly literary but minor form of Free Indirect Style, Banfield now takes up the two major forms of narrative fiction - sentences of narration, and sentences that express consciousness.

She first dismisses the notion that narration and consciousness need have to do with communication. The communicative functions of language are exercised by what she calls discourse. Banfield's careful definition of communicative discourse - expressions that contain a Speaker and an actual present Addressee/Hearer, and a Present which describes the moment of utterance - clearly excludes a narrative sentence "which may or may not contain a Speaker, but which has no Addressee/Hearer, no Present, and no Here and Now". Presumably, since there is no Now, there cannot be a Self in narrative sentences; the Now is the moment of individual consciousness, and without some moment of consciousness, the Self cannot exist. Narrative sentences lack all of the distinguishable signs of communication. The sentences of narrative are, then, purely expressive. In addition, since they lack a Self, which could be ironically mistaken about the facts of a situation, they represent "the incontrovertible truth of the fiction".

Banfield is at her subtle best when she describes the other sort of purely expressive sentence, the "sentence which represents consciousness". If I understand her correctly she defines these sentences as possibly lacking Speakers, and as lacking Addressee/Hearers (of course), and Presents, but as containing Nows (individual moments of consciousness). They also lack a time of utterance and a Speaking voice. Hence the shift in French from the *point de vue simple* to the *impairfait* signals a shift from narrated discrete events to moments of perception.

Un matin avant le jour, le Tétrarque Hérode-Antipas vint s'accouder, et regarda.
Les montagnes, immédiatement sous lui, commençaient à découvrir leurs crêtes, pendant que leur masse, jusqu'au fond des abîmes, étoit encore dans l'ombre. Un brouillard flottait, il se déchira, et les contours de la mer Morte apparurent. L'aube, qui se levait derrière Machaërus, épanchait une rougeur.
(Flaubert, "Hérodiade")

The sentences in the *point de vue simple* describe the objective facts; the *impairfait* represents the observations of a sensibility, perhaps Hérode's.

Here the Self is unspeaking. It expresses a passive consciousness - the eye that sees but regards not, the ear that hears but listens not, the judgment that absorbs but does not discriminate. Only those perceptions that are of crucial value to the observing consciousness will ever attain to the rank of represented thought or reproduced utterance. Irony can be admitted when the sentences of narration yield to sentences expressing consciousness, which have a Self who can be mistaken.

Support for the existence of this specialized consciousness is adduced from Descartes, Russell and Sartre. Russell for example, writes:

Suppose you are out walking on a wet day, and you see a puddle and avoid it. You are not likely to say to yourself: "there is a puddle; it will be advisable not to step in it." But if somebody says "why did you suddenly step aside?" you would answer "because I didn't wish to step into that puddle." You know, retrospectively, that you had a visual perception . . . and . . . you express this knowledge in words. But what would you have known, and in what sense, if your attention had not been called to the matter by the questioner? . . . Can one remember what one never knew? That depends on the meaning of the word "know".

This non-reflective consciousness is reported in sentences representing consciousness; *reflective consciousness*, however, is reported by represented (speech and) thought, that is, in free indirect style, or even by direct quotation. The difference is usually apparent in the text.

Banfield then embarks on a search for the historical roots of these Speakerless and specifically literary forms, and for the origins of fiction.

First she attempts to discover the point at which the Free Indirect Style entered Western literature. This seems to be in the seventeenth century in French (with La Fontaine), in the eighteenth century in German with Goethe, and in the eighteenth century in English, perhaps with Fielding, but certainly by the time of Jane Austen.

Banfield finds this dating significant: it is the beginning of the period of inexpensive printed books. She argues that their advent created a "speech form" divorced from the actual presence of the Speaker, and therefore allowing the possibility of "unspeakeable sentences". She finds in the written text the source of all of the specifically literary sentences she has analysed: represented speech and sentences expressing a non-reflective consciousness.

These last she posits as the source of narrative fictionality, since they even fictionalize history. If a historiographer injects consciousness-sentences into his text, that part of the text is thereby fictionalized. If for example some popular historian writes: "Napoleon invaded Belgium in the middle of June, 1815, across the border at Charleroi. June 17 dawned bright and clear. Napoleon stood on the battlefield of Waterloo", he is writing sentences of pure history that remain incontrovertible because they contain no *non-reflexive* Self. However, when he adds: "The morning fog was rising. It was going to be a fine day", the reader may feel obscurely that the fiction has begun.

Banfield comments: But we need not pursue the problem of fictionality any further in this direction to arrive at the difference

specific of narrative fiction. For linguistic forms, for example, as we know, it is not the sentences of narration, but the sentences which can only be fictionally true. The sentences representing non-reflective consciousness are not, however, to be found in historical narrative. Or rather, when it occurs there, it introduces the fictional into a historical text. . . . They are a sign that we have entered the realm of fiction, or, at least, where what can be documented passes into the inner workings of another, or, another than the speaker's consciousness.

We here can recall her earlier principle, "one speaker cannot express the subjectivity of another", but we must add "without fictionalizing text". With *Unspeakeable Sentences* we have a work by a linguist who knows where the important problems lie. The book should be required reading for literary critics (and also for linguists). This is not to say that Banfield has tied up all loose ends, or that some of her analysis could not be strengthened from a slightly different perspective. Speech act theory, for example, approaches some of the problems she treats in an interesting angle. Let us assume there are now five broad categories of speech-acts; let us call them *Declarations*, *Imperatives*, *Declarations*, *Assertions* and *Exclamations*. Of these the three last require a "you", that you can reasonably expect to give information, or change the world in you, or become altered by the *Declarations*. However, the need for a second person does not seem to be *urgently* present in *Assertions* and *Exclamations*. If literature contains essentially *Assertives* or *Exclamations*, these pragmatic conditions allow literary "speech-acts" to be stubbornly uncommunicative.

Literature is by its nature separate from an actual occasion of speech. Present-Now. It can be described as a type of *preserved utterance*, whose "locutors" are absent, although they may attend subsequent "perlocutors" of the literary text. This because loss of "contiguity" in literary speech acts may suggest that literature consists of mitigated *Exclamations* or *Assertives*, since in these acts contiguity-condition is only weakly required.

Nor does Banfield solve completely the problem of fictionality. Sentences expressing non-reflective consciousness may distinguish pure fiction from pure history, but what distinguishes pure fiction from fictionalized history? An important element of fictionality seems to me to be the use of non-referential proper nouns. (The Alexandrian pastoral romance was "fiction" in this sense long before La Fontaine or Jane Austen.) If I put historical life of Napoleon into a rewritten changing the actual names of people and places and things to non-referential ones, a work of fiction would thereby be created. Here it would be a work of non-reflective consciousness, and other words, the roots of narrative may go deeper than the seventeenth century.

Critics, however, should be able to find in Ann Banfield's book new tools of analysis.

French Literary Theory: A Reader recently published by Cambridge University Press, £25.00, 0 521 23081 0. Edited by Tzvetan Todorov, one of the world's leading experts on the subject, this is an anthology of studies by French literary theorists representing the most significant contributions to the field made in France in the last few years. The essays, previously unpublished in English, cover such topics as the "methodology of literary studies", the specifics of literary creation, and the issues raised by the classification of literature into genres and periods. They include "Criticism and poetics" by Genette; "What is a text?" by Philippe Hamon; and "The effect" by Roland Barthes.

POLITICS

Appealing to the masses

S. J. Woolf

J. BREULLY
Nationalism and the State
211pp. Manchester University Press, £15.95, 0 7190 0692 9

Of the great historical myths of the modern world, nationalism has proved to be the most effective. The nationalist ideology of the right of "nations", themselves defining their individuality, to exist as sovereign, independent states, has conquered the world in a uniquely undisputed manner, unlike (for example) atheism or communism. The legacy of nationalism has permeated modern society, conditioning our minds to the extent that even opponents of the creation and existence of nation-states as historically inevitable and "natural".

This historical determinism has coloured most critical writings on nationalism, from those searching for intellectual origins (Kohn, Hayes, Cobden, Cobden, Kedourie) to more general accounts of the emergence of nation-states (Schaffer, Seton-Watson), and the innumerable histories of particular countries. For the earlier period of European nationalism (say, up to 1914), the vigorous nationalists' teleological assertions about the existence of a nation's cultural identity and the awakening and diffusion of its national consciousness constitute the acknowledged terrain of discussion. These assertions are usually accepted, even those who dispute them never question the existence of a "national consciousness". In the later period, when nationalism assumed more aggressive and destructive forms, this assertion could be explained in terms of fundamental "defects" in the process of formation of the nation, or even more loosely as "pathologies of national character". The analysis of the post-colonial world in Europe have tended to repeat decolonization - once more

following the version presented by indigenous opponents of foreign rule - as the assertion of their identity by pre-existing cultural groups (tribes, ethnic or religious units), albeit within sometimes artificial frontiers imposed by the colonial power.

What is common to all these interpretations is acceptance of the objective existence of a "nation", that is, of a population, usually in a more or less precisely defined territory, which becomes politically significant as its self-awareness is aroused, at least among a minority of its elites. Why or even how nationalism is so effective and powerful are questions that tend either not to be asked or to be answered in terms proposed by the nationalists themselves. As John Breuilly aptly puts it, nationalism "becomes either a non-rational force which erupts into history or a mask to be stripped away in order to locate the 'real' forces beneath".

The central concern of Breuilly's important book is to remove this transcendental or instrumental interpretation of nationalism by examining it less as an ideology than as a concrete political movement with specific goals - primarily that of gaining or exercising power. In the process he presents and criticizes a range of widely accepted, but usually poorly formulated theories relating to nationalism, such as those of "national character"; of nationalism's class basis, of the culturally or ethnically "natural" quality of tribal or other sub-nationalities, of big business and fascism, of the modernizing impact of nationalism, of the national "integration" of the working class, of revolutionary peasant nationalism, and of the propensity towards nationalism among intellectuals.

Nationalist ideology, for Breuilly, assumes a subordinate function as one, albeit crucially important, instrument by which a nationalist leadership seeks to obtain mass support. Why nationalism should have been more effective than other ideologies in obtaining such support is explained by its ability to transform sentiments or practices habitually accepted as belonging to the "private sphere" (family, community, solidarity, etc) into "public" values, as symbols and

ceremonies particularly fitted to the situation and social groups for which they are intended. In the end, Breuilly's argument is not entirely satisfactory, but maybe it is not possible to provide a wholly rational explanation for irrational behaviour. After all, how, rationally, can one explain why individuals of completely different origin, background and experience have continued to voice their support for their own nationalism, in such different places and contexts as Nasser's Cairo, May Day in Moscow, Soweto, the Emperor's anniversary in Japan, or most recently during the Falklands War, the Plaza Major in Buenos Aires and the local elections in Britain?

But Breuilly's main concern is with nationalist political action. Here he has made a fundamental contribution, which makes all previous writings on nationalism look dated. He has attempted, with considerable success, the extremely ambitious task of comparing nationalist movements, ever time and place, in order to offer an explanation both of the conditions necessary for such movements to become significant, and of the implications of the relationship between the political context and the specific form of nationalism.

Nationalism is firmly defined as a modern phenomenon, which could only arise in the context of the modern state. Although nationalism as a vague sentiment of support for the "nation", usually expressed against a foreign threat, can be found much earlier, Breuilly excludes it from his definition precisely because it remains essentially a cultural manifestation. The difference between his and earlier approaches can be neatly summarized in his treatment of nineteenth-century European nationalism. Breuilly accepts the importance of the French Revolution in establishing the concept of the sovereignty of the people as a necessary basis for nationalism, but he does not accept any automatic transition from this cultural idea to the political movements of the nineteenth century. Nationalism only becomes significant when it shifts its basis away from a cultural identity (by intellectual sleight-of-hand, as Breuilly puts it) into

a deliberate attempt to gain the support of social groups hitherto ignored or excluded from the political community. Nationalism arises among the élites of the political community in opposition to the growth or demands of the modern state. It requires the support of many different élites, but more habitually needs to mobilize broader groups among the population.

Of fundamental importance for Breuilly is the way in which the political and institutional structure of the state against which individual nationalisms react conditions their form and ultimate possibility of success. Modern bureaucratic channels are required, through which the nationalist leadership can both collaborate and express its opposition, so acquiring credibility internally and legitimacy in the eyes of foreign states, according to its ability to mobilize hitherto excluded social groups by linking local, intermediate and national levels of political action. By concentrating on this almost dialectical relationship between the centralizing, often reforming thrust of the state and the nationalist response it arouses, Breuilly is able to offer a historically convincing explanation of the multiple forms nationalism has taken in the past two centuries. His use of the role of the state to explain both European and anti-colonial nationalisms is particularly revealing and effective.

But by concentrating on this relationship with the state he is equally able to draw out the fundamental differences between nationalism in a world with relatively few nation-states and in one where nation-states have become the norm. Breuilly effectively strips nationalism of its claim to be an historical "natural" phenomenon, and demonstrates its emergence as a construct. In a world of nation-states where some but not other nationalisms have achieved power, these rival sub- or pan-nationalisms are unlikely to succeed, not least because of the reluctance of existing states to upset their territorial arrangements.

Breuilly's conclusion is that nationalism is strongest as an opposition movement, and only in exceptional circumstances (turning against "anti-national" groups, or "nation-building" in new states) likely to form more than one element in a state's foreign policy.

In this ambitious panorama, it is inevitable that the reader will disagree over details. Breuilly's deeper knowledge of Germany than of Italy seems to have led him to dismiss the importance of the nationalist élite in pre-unification Italy (in terms of the local landed gentry and of business support) and to treat the nationalist aspects of Italian fascism somewhat summarily. His choice of case-studies for anti-colonial forms of nationalism is regrettably anglocentric (with the sole exception of the Belgian Congo, which he uses as a counter-factual example of the absence of the conditions necessary for nationalism).

But these are minor matters which do not take away from the importance of this study. The strength of Breuilly's interpretation lies in three particular qualities. First, the remarkable range of his knowledge, which demonstrates the advantages of a comparative approach to history. Second, the skill with which he has utilized the methodologies of political sociology and political science to group, compare, interpret and above all test the historical evidence. Third, the rigour with which he presents his arguments, constantly aware of the accusations of unrepresentativeness that can easily be levelled at so broad an interpretation; this has led him to search not only for the most dissimilar cases of successful nationalisms, but for instances of unsuccessful nationalisms, and even for "counter-factual" examples where conditions for nationalist movements seemed to exist, but nationalism did not develop. This important book will not only teach its readers a great deal, but it will make them reflect on what they knew already.

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